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THE PRIME MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID

THE EARL OF DERBY

THE

PRIME MINISTERS of ENGLAND

A SERIES OF POLITICAL BIOGRAPHIES

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID

Author of "The Life and Time of Sydney Smith"

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THE

EARL OF DERBY

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

LONDON
J. M. DENT & CO.
ALDINE HOUSE, BEDFORD STREET
1906

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PREFACE

In some considerable reading of books of history, I have found that the most profitable are usually those in which the author, while giving his facts as fully and loyally as he can, makes no secret of his opinions and argues as stoutly as he may for them. Therefore, and not because I suppose that these opinions are in my own case of any importance or interest to the world, I think it may not be impertinent to say that this little book is written from the point of view of a Tory. And as I have heard several persons say that they do not exactly know what a Tory means, I may add that I define a Tory as a person who would, at the respective times and in the respective circumstances, have opposed Catholic Emancipation, Reform, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the whole Irish Legislation of Mr. Gladstone.

There is no full or official life of Lord Derby; and it appeared to me that, as those who were in a position to supply the deficiency had not chosen to do so, it would not be proper to approach them with the request for private information. Moreover, there is, in the scale of a book like this, room for little more than the attempt

to sketch the career of the subject sufficiently, and judge it from a consistent standpoint, on the basis of all the published information accessible. I need not specify the sources of this latter, but I do not think I have neglected any of importance. There is, I believe, but one book specifically devoted to Lord Derby, that of Mr. T. E. Kebbel. I was not aware of its existence when I undertook the present volume ; indeed, I think it was not published. I have had sometimes to take a different view from Mr. Kebbel's, but I am glad of this opportunity of saluting him as a precursor.

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LORD DERBY

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

Lord Derby as Chancellor of the University of Oxford—The House of Stanley—Eton and Christ Church days—First political experiences.

In one of the most famous passages of the 'Confessions of an Opium Eater' the author describes the effect upon his mind, at different times, of certain different catch-words or phrases which rang in his ears. Most men have probably experienced something of the kind, and for my part I could mention more than one parallel to *Consul Romanus*. None, however, that I can remember exceeded in effect the words 'Edward Geoffrey, Earl of Derby, our honoured Lord and Chancellor,' which used to form part of the bidding prayer at Oxford, whensoever a man was minded, between the years 1863 and 1868, to call upon himself to hear a University sermon. That diversion has at different times been more or less in fashion; I saw a jeremiad on its disuse while I was writing this book. But it has probably never been more in fashion, or more deservedly so, than during the period I have mentioned. I should doubt whether at any

time in English history, since the seventeenth century, the lover of argumentative or rhetorical eloquence could, in a single city, and on constantly recurring occasions, hear such examples of it in the pulpit as the various styles of the then Bishop (Wilberforce) of Oxford, of Pusey, of Mansel, of Liddon, and of not a few others, only inferior to these four. But, for my part, I think I used to like my favourite phrase, delivered in the various tones and manners of each preacher, as much as anything in the actual preaching.

For it is a good and stately phrase in itself; and the subject of it was not unworthy to be thus celebrated, *ore rotundo*. It has been the peculiar good fortune of the University of Oxford to possess, during three successive incumbencies, holders of the rather vague and remote office of Chancellor who could appeal to the imagination of youth in a manner very far above the ordinary; and Lord Derby possessed this attraction in a degree, perhaps, even superior to that in which either his predecessor had, or his successor has, exercised it. That he had himself any particular affection for Oxford I do not know; and I do not think it very likely. But he was an Oxford man in the proper sense (which, it need hardly be said, means undergraduate rather than graduate), and he presented in his own person a singular union of the tastes and opinions in matters political, ecclesiastical, scholarly, sportive, and other, which used, if they do not compose it now, to make up the Oxford ideal. To be thrice a Tory Prime Minister, to have resigned office even in Whig and unregenerate days rather than injure the Church, to run second for the Derby, and to translate Homer not unacceptably—no well-conducted and healthy undergraduate could possibly add much more as an expression of the chief end of man—though of course

it would have been better to run first than second. Towards the termination of Lord Derby's career, the Second Reform Bill gave indeed a certain shock to this ideal. But during the greater part of the time referred to that was not ; and the fond memory dwelt rather on Lord Derby's description of the Italians, on his sallies against the Duke of Argyll and Lord John, and on the scores of privately repeated utterances of his brilliant and unruly tongue. No man ever lost a youthful adherent by political sarcasm.

Lord Derby's Ministry and his life came to an end some time before I myself fell into the ways of professional politics as regards journalism, and though I can remember taking a boyish interest in at least his second administration, of the period of his first I confess that I remember nothing, except the Duke of Wellington's funeral. The keen attention which an undergraduate sometimes pays to contemporary politics is not often accompanied by a very accurate study of the politics of times immediately preceding his own. But every man who takes up the study of politics seriously soon finds that this particular department is what he must study first and most if he is really to understand what is and, still more, what is going to be. It is, therefore, a good many years since I set myself to form some complete idea of Lord Derby's political position and achievement, and I hope that the result which I set out here will be found to be not unduly tinged with the youthful enthusiasm above referred to, yet to owe something to it as a stimulus.

With that enthusiasm the historical glories of his house had of course something to do. The honours of the Stanleys from at least the beginning of the fifteenth century are enough to satisfy any reasonable fancy. Every-

body who is good for anything, I suppose, learns his English history first from Shakspeare, and if the appearance of Sir William Stanley as gentleman gaoler to Dame Eleanor of Gloster is not excessively heroic, it is any rate interesting. This appearance, however, did in a manner coincide with the first prominent appearance of the family. They had like others 'come over with Richard Conqueror'; but till the end of the twelfth century they bore the surname of Audley. Then they intermarried with a Staffordshire and Derbyshire family who had held the estate of Stoneleigh, Stanelegh, or Stanley, and took that name above six hundred years ago. The foundation of the house, so far as its later greatness went, was laid by Sir John Stanley, who a century afterwards married Isabel, heiress of Lathom. By her both this famous estate, afterwards to be lost, and that of Knowsley, which has always remained to the family, came into it. This Sir John also obtained the Isle of Man from Henry IV. on the forfeiture of the Percies. The grandson of Sir John, Thomas, was summoned to Parliament as Lord Stanley in 1456, and during the whole of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and earlier seventeenth centuries the Stanleys were probably the most powerful of all Lancashire houses. Even in the Manchester district they exercised more influence than the Wests, who had the lordship of Manchester itself, and their influence extended over Cheshire as well. The great part which they played in the later wars of the Roses is universally known, and the vicissitudes which ended in the decisive stroke on Bosworth Field are told graphically in the ballad of the 'Lady Bessie,' which is one of the chief historical documents for that most imperfectly documented time. Lord Stanley's vacillation was rewarded by the earldom of Derby, and justified among other things by his

connection with Henry VII., whose mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort—*the* 'Lady Margaret'—he had married. Under the Tudors the Stanleys were among the richest and most powerful families of the realm. They obtained a second title and a peerage older than their own by the marriage of George Stanley, the hostage of Bosworth, with the heiress of the eighth Lord Strange. The Stanley who at Flodden 'with Cheshire charged and Lancashire' was of the house, though not head of it, and the third earl was one of the greatest and wealthiest of Elizabeth's nobles. In that reign, too, Lord Strange, the heir to the title, linked himself to English literature by maintaining a troop of players which included Shakspeare in his earlier days.

It was the seventh earl, James, the husband of Charlotte de la Tremoille, who, first as Lord Strange and then as Lord Derby, figured brilliantly and disastrously in the Great Rebellion. He was put to death at Bolton, and was one of the bravest and most loyal, as he was certainly one of the most unfortunate and caballed against, of Cavaliers. His Countess's defence of Lathom has entirely obscured his own exploits in mere popularity, but they were of a very difficult and a very meritorious kind ; all the more so, that no sooner had he obtained any success than, either by evil counsel of his enemies or by misjudgment on the King's own part, his troops were ordered away elsewhere, and his work was to begin again. No Cavalier made a more gallant sacrifice than he did in leaving his stronghold of Man to take part in the Worcester campaign, and he was one of the few who, without political prejudice, may be said to have been judicially murdered by the other party.

It has been thought, though I do not know that there is any decided evidence on the subject, that this lack of

favour at Court continued after the Restoration, and determined the estrangement of the Stanleys (a younger branch, that of Alderley, had always been Puritan and Roundhead) from the Tory party in the days of James II., who dismissed the ninth earl from his lieutenancy during the mad campaign against the Church of England. They certainly were of the earliest in welcoming William of Orange, and the Whiggism then implanted in the family lasted till our present subject changed back again.

This change was not affected by a breach in the continuity of succession to the peerage. The direct male line of the Lord Stanley who decided Bosworth failed with the death of the tenth earl in 1736, and while the family thus lost their kingdom of Man, which descended to the Duke of Athole as heir-general, the earldom, with most of the estates, passed to Sir Edward Stanley of Bickerstaffe, a descendant of the younger son of George Lord Strange, who died in the lifetime of his father, the first earl. Lathom, too, once their principal Lancashire seat, passed away by marriage. Fortunately for themselves, however, they retained large estates, in the immediate neighbourhood of Liverpool and other towns afterwards to be great, which have of late years brought the family property to an even more flourishing state relatively than when it was at its greatest just before the Civil War. This recovery had been going on from the time of the reign of Charles II., when the family prosperity was at its nadir, and when the shadowy sovereignty of Man was, in appearance at any rate, the most valuable possession left to it. But, politically speaking, the period of eclipse continued much longer, and there can hardly be said to have been a Stanley who was a really prominent politician between Earl James's death on the scaffold at Bolton and

the reappearance of Edward Stanley in the Commons as a kind of Canningite Whig after his election for Preston in 1826.

Our present subject, whose full surname was Smith-Stanley,[1] was born at Knowsley on March 29, 1799. His grandfather, the twelfth earl, who survived till 1834, the very year in which his grandson quitted the Whig party, was something of a politician, a friend of the wild Prince and Poins—in other words, of the Regent and Fox—a great sportsman, the husband (by his second marriage) of Miss Farren, and the founder of the Derby and the Oaks. The thirteenth earl, whose mother was a Hamilton, married his cousin, Charlotte Margaret Hornby, collected at Knowsley one of the finest private zoological collections in Europe, held the earldom for seventeen years, and died in 1851. Both he and his son were called to the House of Peers in the lifetime of their respective fathers as Lords Stanley of Bickerstaffe. The old second title of the family, Lord Strange,[2] has never been revived in recent times, and the second son of our Lord Derby now holds that of Lord Stanley of Preston. With this borough the family were in the days of their

[1] I remember a youthful Radical once taunting a youthful Tory with the declaration that Lord Derby's name was not Stanley at all—that it was Smith—and I have seen similar statements from persons who should have known better. The name Smith was taken as a prefix to Stanley, on the marriage, with the heiress of an Essex family, of the eleventh earl's elder son. She was our Lord Derby's great-grandmother.

[2] To avoid *scandalum magnatum*, let me say that I am quite aware that the title of Lord Strange is borne of right by the Duke of Athole. This, however, appears to be a barony of 1628, not the old one of 1299. Indeed, even after the succession of the younger branch, the eleventh earl's heir was, the Peerages say, 'improperly styled Lord Strange.'

tenure of Lathom closely connected locally, and they have maintained a Parliamentary connection which used to be celebrated in more cheerful days by an election song with the following refrain :—

Ho ! ho ! Stanley for ever !
He shall marry a wife that's rich,
And shall ride in a coach and six,
Ho ! ho ! Stanley for ever !

The rhyme is less rich than the intention is excellent.

Edward Geoffrey went in due course to Eton and thence to Christ Church. He a little preceded the best known group that illustrated the school and the University among his contemporaries. The special renown of Christ Church under Dean Cyril Jackson was somewhat over, and the great ferment of Oxford feeling which preceded and brought about the Tractarian and Young England movements had not begun when he moved up the Thames. Except at Oriel, the Oxford of the end of the Regency was not a specially stimulating place. It had, as far as we can judge, relapsed into or not emerged from something like its condition of the last century, with fair scholarship and plenty of good-fellowship, but with no great intellectual leaven in it. It was both then and afterwards rather the fashion at Christ Church not to take a degree, and that Lord Derby left the University without taking one is nothing extraordinary. That he took the Chancellors' prize for Latin verse in 1819, with a poem on Syracuse, shows that in the then arrangement of the Schools he might have taken honours if he had chosen. But he probably did not choose ; and he is not at all likely to have been much urged by the authorities. Dean Gaisford was not the only magnate of

'the House' who held that 'collections' made the Schools practically superfluous. In 1820, almost as soon as he was legally qualified, Mr. Stanley was returned to Parliament, not for a family borough, but for the Parliamentarily famous and very corrupt one of Stockbridge. It belonged to a Tory West Indian who happened to want money, and he sold it to a Whig peer, who nominated young Stanley. It is interesting to compare the recruit thus sent to the House of Commons with the average member (on either side let me say, for this is no party matter) who, after three Reform Bills and Corrupt Practices Acts innumerable, is now usually sent in his stead. Lord Derby himself, not long afterwards, complained of the rotten borough members that, whatever their talents, they would not be looked on by the people as their representatives. A thoroughgoing political thinker (which, with all his brilliancy, he never was) would have looked at the end rather than at the beginning, and have asked whether, if you get the best men to govern the country, you do not thereby infallibly get the best system of representation?

We have few personal details of him at this time, one being that quite early in his Parliamentary career his future friend and colleague, Lord Malmesbury, used to meet him at Bowood, clad, after a fashion already becoming obsolete among Whig gentlemen, in the famous old Whig uniform of 'buff and blue.' To add a few details of the same kind before beginning the discussion of his political career, he made in 1824 a tour to North America, which was as unusual then as it would be unnoteworthy now, performed his second most important duty as punctually as he had done the first—that of getting into Parliament—by marrying, in 1825, Emma Caroline Wilbraham, a daughter of

the family which had succeeded the Stanleys at Lathom, and in the next year was returned for Preston, a family borough, as has been said, after a fashion, but by no means one merely in the family nomination. He was already well known as a sportsman as well as a politician ; his grandfather, who had started the Oaks twenty years before Edward Geoffrey was born, having initiated him in both mysteries.

The Preston election is, however, too interesting not to require a few words. The franchise of the borough was of the widest. Indeed, it was practically household suffrage ; and one of the most popular men in England with the lower classes, William Cobbett, was one of the candidates. Cobbett had already tried once (at Coventry) to enter Parliament, and he was now backed by a subscription headed by one of his friends of higher rank than himself, Sir Thomas Beevor, of Hargham, in Norfolk, in his endeavour to carry Preston. There was a good fight, but Cobbett was left at the bottom of the poll, and Stanley polled more than three times his number, the exact votes being—Stanley, 3,041 ; Wood, 1,982 ; Barrie (a naval man who stood), 1,657 ; and Cobbett, 995. It is rather curious, considering Cobbett's license of speech, and his habit of paying off old grudges, that uncomplimentary references to Stanley are not common in his writings. But Stanley was neither then nor afterwards disinclined to Reform, and Cobbett was not, like some other persons of his kidney, by any means a foe to aristocrats, as such. Moreover, Stanley's subsequent discomfiture by 'Orator' Hunt, an old friend and a deadly present enemy of Cobbett's, would have been quite sufficient to conciliate the author of the 'Rural Rides,' who seems to have consoled himself at the time by describing his victorious competitor as 'Spitten-upon-

Stanley.' The election is specially noteworthy as showing that there was no real demand for Reform in the sense of a dislike to the kind of member previously returned. Even the absence of the ballot could have interposed no difficulty in the way of the majority of the electors of such a town as Preston, and they presumably chose, as they afterwards did in the case of the worthless Hunt, a member after their own heart. The thing is not of the first consequence, but it is useful to illustrate what I take to be the Tory position on this subject—to wit, that the restricted and varied franchise admitted of at least as decided an expression of the national will on important points as the unrestricted and uniform one, while it maintained a greater steadiness when the points were not important, and provided on the whole a much better class of member. If men wish that every individual's will shall be taken account of in settling the Government, then the increased suffrage may be a good. If the object is simply the attainment of the best Government, it is pretty certainly not a good. Not to mention that even the individual's rights can never be secured by enlarging the franchise, for the very simple reason that in every case there must be a minority, which is governed in the teeth of its own will, though it is sometimes all but equal in numbers to the majority.

CHAPTER II

WHIG DAYS

Position of Parties when Mr. Stanley entered political life—His early Speeches—His Canningism—His criticism of Peel's attitude towards Emancipation—The Whigs and Reform—Stanley's part in fighting the Reform Question—His government of Ireland and of the Colonies—His difficulties with his colleagues.

To the merely superficial person who sees in the books that Lord Derby began life as a Whig, served that party for some ten years and more, took part in the great Whig Revolution of the First Reform Bill, and then was for the rest of his life a leader of the Conservatives, it may seem sufficient to say that here was a man of no political consistency. As I shall hope to show in the course of these pages, Lord Derby was indeed by no means a man who adjusted the whole of his political beliefs to one consistent and connected scheme; but just as little was he anything like a 'rat.' At the time when he entered politics, it cannot be said that the great parties in England were divided from each other by any thoroughgoing and logical difference of principle. The fact is that there never had been such a division since the collapse and almost total disappearance of the Tories proper, at the accession of George I. For sixty years and more after that event even what was called the Tory party had few or no definite principles, and

whether it had principles or not, it had no power of carrying them into action. For half the time it was distracted by the problem of Jacobitism, and even after the question of succession ceased to be a practical one, it adopted no settled point of view. It sometimes joined with some of the constantly splitting off fragments of Whig intrigue : it sometimes kept to itself ; but it never had real power, and had it had power it had no creed to carry out. Nor had the revived Toryism of the younger Pitt and of his not too grateful successors—Sidmouth, Liverpool, Eldon, and the rest—a much better claim to possess a coherent and definite political confession of faith. Even in its earlier days it was rather creedless, while in its later, as represented by Canning especially, and to some extent by Peel and the Duke of Wellington, it was still more amorphous. It had had the good fortune, or rather the blind instinct, to fix on the defence of the Empire abroad and the repression of the revolutionists at home, and to cling to them ; while great part of the Whigs had been guided by ill-luck or wrong instinct into the opposite path. But the time was, in 1821, a time of profound peace, and the revolutionary spirit, though as active as ever, was at any rate in no open connection with any public foe. The Whigs were little, if at all, better provided than the Tories with a creed by articles and symbols of profession, and though they had an ugly and unpatriotic past, that past was not extremely recent. If they had any militant watchword, it was Catholic Emancipation, to which Pitt himself had made some approaches, and which was perhaps the most plausible of all war-cries. No one could have been blamed for anticipating that something like the manœuvring by groups of the previous century would set in again, or that it would be possible to govern

the country by a sort of understanding between the chiefs of opposing parties, such as that which actually prevailed between Lord Derby himself and Lord Palmerston long afterwards between 1860 and 1865. More particularly is it to be noticed (and there will be occasion in this very chapter to point it out and illustrate it in detail) that the recognised Whig creed, such as it was, involved subscription to hardly a single article which a Tory could not accept. The question between the King and Queen was a merely private one: the policy of the Six Acts was neither condemned by all Whigs nor approved by all Tories. The Whigs as such were not necessarily Reformers: they were not Free-traders: and if they had been either, it was notorious that the one really great Tory of anything like recent days had been distinctly in favour of Free-trade, and had personally meditated a scheme of adjusting the representation to the altered condition of the country. It is true that at the time when Stanley entered Parliament, the Whigs, as has been said, were as a party set on, and the Tories were as a party set against, the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities. But even here the principles, and to some extent the practice, of Pitt might be quoted, while George Canning, Pitt's most brilliant if not his greatest pupil, the first English statesman of the day as far as brains were concerned, and one for whom both Eton and Oxford served as training schools of admirers, was a declared Emancipator. It is almost impossible in considering the politics and the politicians of 1810-1830 to over-estimate the influence of Canning.

There was therefore nothing, even if Mr. Stanley's opinions had been much more formed than those of a young man of twenty-one might be expected to be, which

could have raised a doubt in his mind as to the propriety of sitting on the Whig side in a Parliament where his grandfather in the Upper and his father (who had not yet been raised to a peerage of his own) in the Lower House were already Whig magnates. He took matters very quietly for some time, and did not make his maiden speech (which even then was not on a political subject) till his fourth session. It was on the subject of gas, and, as Sir James Mackintosh said, in the rather obligatory compliment which a politician pays in such cases to a novice on his own, and sometimes even on the other, side, 'affords the strongest promise that the talents with which he supported the local interests of his constituents would be exerted with equal ardour in maintaining the interests of the country.' The fact was, however, that the Whigs were very ill off then for young men at once of position and of talent, and that the heir of such a house as that of Stanley, with such a reputation as he had already (though one does not quite see how) created for himself, was a catch not to be neglected. It was some two months later (May 6, 1824) that he gave the real measure of his quality, and this measure could hardly have been so pleasing to Mackintosh. Mr. Kebbel has said, truly enough, that in this, practically his maiden, speech, as far as politics were concerned, 'Stanley advanced those Conservative opinions which were destined ten years later to sever him from the Whig party.' I should myself, however, say that the speech contained in essence not so much Conservatism (a wishy-washy word not then introduced, and to be introduced under evil auspices) as pure Toryism in the enunciation of the principle that no circumstances could justify an interference with the property of the Church which would not equally justify interference with landed,

funded, and commercial property. As Joseph Hume's resolution on the Irish Church, against which Stanley spoke, declared the expediency of an enquiry 'whether the present Church establishment in Ireland be not more than commensurate to the services to be performed,' it will be perceived at once how utterly alien were Stanley's principles, Whig or not Whig, from anything which would now receive, or for at least sixty years has received, the name of Liberal. There was, therefore, nothing whatever to prevent his accepting overtures from Canning when that Minister formed his Coalition on principles the propriety of which, as they affected Canning himself, does not concern us here, or from continuing to hold office under the 'transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich,' which followed. Indeed, Stanley's association with Canning (he was Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and thus gained his first official experience) seems to have stirred in him a fibre much more Liberal than any which had given evidence of itself when he was in opposition as a declared Whig. It is rather curious that Canning, whose Toryism, at least on the subject of Reform, was unquestionable, though in other respects it too frequently gave way to Canningism, should, by enlisting this young Whig, have set him on the path which ended in his being protagonist, as far as speaking went, on the side of Reform itself. The expression which I quoted above was almost pure Tory; the following, which occurred in a speech explaining his reasons for not continuing to serve under the Duke of Wellington, is something more than pure Whig. Stanley now spoke with contempt of 'Tories of the old school, sticklers for inveterate abuses under the name of the wisdom of our ancestors,' of 'the spirit which supported the Holy Alliance, the friend of

despotism, rather than the advocate of struggling freedom,' and declared that this spirit was 'hastening to the fate of its merits.'

There is surely some justification in this contrast for those among the Tory party who regarded Canning as a false brother and a corrupter of youth. It expressed, indeed, no very deep-laid convictions on the part of the neophyte, who was only nine and twenty. Neither his own foreign policy, nor his attitude to what is called religious liberty, nor his attitude to 'inveterate abuses,' was in the least Canningite, while, oddly enough, on this latter head Canning himself to the last was a 'stickler.' But there can be very little doubt that the episode of Canning's accession to power as a Coalition Minister determined more than anything else the subsequent attitude of the Whigs on Reform, and with it the subsequent course of English history. And, perhaps, it may be added, that the resentment with which all adherents of Canning regarded the attitude of Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington towards him, not improbably had some influence on the kind of detachment which curiously marked the relations of Lord Derby with the Tory party itself, during the ten years from 1835 to 1845, and even to some extent later. For the speaker's own future history this same speech has no inconsiderable interest. It contained a strong attack on Peel and the Duke for their behaviour to Canning in refusing to join him, and so breaking up the party, while they subsequently declared that there was no difference of principle between them. Stanley could not, of course, at that time know how far more forcible his words were to become, only a few months later, when Peel took up the very measure on which the split with Canning had chiefly turned; but he

must have remembered the situation sixteen years afterwards when Peel executed his second great *volte-face*. And, perhaps, he ought to have remembered it forty years later when he himself went near to following Peel's example on the question of the franchise. But the subject of party-breaking and coat-turning, though an exceedingly interesting one, is too intricate and too thorny to be more than delicately touched upon here. We shall have to return to the touching more than once, but for fuller treatment it must await its own historian, who will have a pleasing theme, and a full one, in the history of parties and their modifications, from 1827 to 1886.

The East Retford discussions of 1828, in which the real question was whether, in case of corruption, it was better to transfer the seat to some unrepresented populous town or to enlarge the borough by throwing in a country district, have sometimes been regarded as preliminary to, and sometimes as entirely unconnected with, the far larger debate of the same kind which so soon succeeded them. Perhaps at the present day their chief interest lies in the fact that the plan which was opposed by the Whig-Liberal party at the time, and which was adopted neither in the Reform Bill of 1832 nor in that of 1867, had almost the monopoly of favour in that of 1885. Next year came Emancipation, in which Stanley, both as a Whig and as a Canningite, was with the majority, but on which he does not seem to have thought it well to speak. Probably he did not see his way to do so without appearing to attack the Church of England, which throughout his political life was the one institution that he never willingly or wittingly assailed. He took occasion, however, on another matter, to pay a compliment to Sir Robert Peel, which was, on the next recurrence of Peel's singular lia-

bility to bolt when the word was 'Charge,' urged with some force against him. I have sometimes wondered whether these extraordinary laudations of Peel—a man with whom Stanley, even when he was his colleague, was at no time on particularly cordial terms, and from whom he was poles asunder on all points of character and temperament—were half ironical. It is possible, but I do not think they were; for, as we shall have occasion to note again and again, and perhaps, before the close of this little book, to examine at length, logical consistency of general creed was by no means Lord Derby's strong point. He was singularly faithful to particular convictions, particular friendships, even particular whims. Canning had been for Emancipation; it was a Whig article of faith, and it was secured by Peel's tergiversation. So he looked on the back more kindly than he ever looked on the front, and said handsome things of it for exhibiting itself.

Even the famous 'very handsome letter' which Mr. Frank Churchill, a little earlier, wrote in reference to his stepmother, cannot have been handsomer than this description of Peel. The 'sacrifices which the right honourable gentleman had felt himself compelled to make' are magnificently complimented. He had sacrificed, it seems, at this shrine, all private, all personal considerations. He had sacrificed the power and influence which he possessed over a large and respectable body of individuals. He had also (this must have made Peel wince) sacrificed 'something of reputation,' but he had conducted himself, in the speaker's opinion, 'with perfect consistency and honour,' for he had 'only a choice of evils.' He had 'proved himself superior to the feeling of pride which dignifies by the name of consistency a pertinacious adherence to an opinion once ex-

pressed.' Had he acted otherwise, he would have 'failed in his duty to his country,' and he could only have preserved his consistency 'at the price of the serenity and tranquillity of the Empire.' Nothing could be more handsome. But if the adversary suggests that men are wont to look with rather different eyes on deserters from and deserters to their own side, I do not know what we are to answer.

There has sometimes been an endeavour to represent the passing of Catholic Emancipation and the espousal by the Whig leaders of Reform for their main principle as being almost unconnected—to argue, at any rate, that if the Tory Ministers had had more prudence, the Reform question might never have become the burning one that it actually became. It is difficult to share this opinion, or to appreciate the reasoning on which it is, no doubt, based. In the first place, even the most uncompromising Tory, I suppose, does not believe that Birmingham and Manchester could have gone much longer without representatives, or that they would have been contented with strictly limited franchises. Whether a really heaven-born Minister with a strong majority could, some years earlier, have taken the bull by the horns, have disfranchised just enough Gattons and Old Sarums to give the absolutely necessary satisfaction, have enlarged the franchise in certain places so as to remove the worst abuses, and yet have left enough small boroughs to seat good men and give wealth its weight, and enough unevenness of voting and seating to prevent the deadly effect of absolute equality, I am not prepared to say. But that such a thing was practically impossible after Peel and Wellington had conceded Catholic Emancipation I am sure. In the first place, they had by that act offended their own party, and made what was thirty-seven years later

called a 'cave' certain. In the second, they had created new and hungry interests, and had disgusted and weakened their great militia of the Anglican Church. In the third, they had practically left no rope for the Whig party to cling to but this very Reform. It may be obvious that many Whig magnates liked Reform as little as most Tory ones. It is true that, after the event, many of them bitterly repented what they had done. It is not only probable, but certain, that their general spirit was that of 'Bear' Ellice and Lord Durham, whom Lord Malmesbury, an innocent traitor in the camp, heard (when he was courting his Whig bride at Chillingham) in discussion how to cook the schedules and the new franchise so as to get rid of local interests belonging to Tories. But all sections of them would have agreed in determining that, if the thing had to be done, they would do it themselves. And with the help of the Radicals and the malcontent Tories, and the powers of threatened interests, they must have succeeded in either mutilating by amendment, or directly throwing out, any Tory attempt at Reform. The question, once started, was certain to run its course.

That Mr. Stanley took a most active and lively part in it, while he had but a lukewarm affection even for Parliamentary Reform itself, and a positive loathing for many things which were pretty certain to follow Reform, is not, as a matter of fact, at all surprising. He loved a fight above all things ; he was not given to look at the day after to-morrow. His wrath against the Tories for their treatment of Canning had not subsided, and I doubt whether even his admiration, recorded above, for Peel's patriotic inconsistency made him love Peel or Peel's party any the more. In the last session of George IV.'s last

Parliament he opposed one Reform scheme and supported another in the most indifferent manner. But the election of 1830, and the great ferment of Continental Liberalism, completed that undoing of the Wellington Government which the Nemesis of their transaction with the Catholic demands had begun. All sorts of unnatural alliances took place, and a Tory-Radical Opposition seated Orator Hunt, one of the most worthless of demagogues, in Stanley's own place at Preston, while the Government lost heavily. Stanley, after his discomfiture at Preston, where he was mobbed as well as beaten, and was even in some danger of his life, found a seat at Windsor. Nevertheless, Parliament had hardly met when the Duke of Wellington delivered a *non possumus* announcement in regard to Reform, and so made it the Whig card at once. A few days later the Ministry rode for a fall on a different question—a motion by Sir Henry Parnell in regard to the Civil List—got that fall, resigned, and let in Lord Grey.

He made Mr. Stanley Chief Secretary for Ireland, and for the next few years the Chief Secretary was not only an eager gladiator in the service of his party in Parliament, but one of the most masterful and influential rulers that Ireland ever had. His policy there has, I think, been overpraised even by Tories, but it was undoubtedly well intentioned, and, as far as keeping a tight hand on disloyalty and agitation went, unexceptionable. But before coming to this, it may be well to despatch his share in the great battle which, according to some, changed the whole idea of the English constitution, and from which all date a new era of English political history.

The Bill was introduced on March 1, 1831, and Stanley spoke comparatively early in the debate. Although, as has

been said, he fought for it, he cannot be said to have based his support, at any rate at first, on grounds which would have commended themselves to ardent Reformers. He thought the influence of the aristocracy would be upheld rather than undermined ; he pointed to the men of rank and fortune who were among the supporters of the Bill to reassure the timid ; he was quite sure that it was not in the least revolutionary ; he thought the new voters would simply be estated in rights which belonged to them in virtue of their property and intelligence. Above all, he professed to support the Bill because of the total failure of attempts to reform piecemeal, admitting that he had hoped that the most notorious cases of delinquency might be selected and reformed one after another. It is impossible to imagine a more 'anodyne' fashion—to use a word much employed in French political discussion—of advocacy, or one less consonant to Radical views on the subject. But a good fighter always warms as he fights, and it so happened that the chief, and indeed temporarily successful, attack on the Bill was aimed directly at the part of the United Kingdom with which Stanley was connected officially, and whose cause he championed with his usual rather headlong, though not at all muddle-headed, chivalry. General Gascoigne's amendment, the carrying of which by eight made Lord Grey dissolve Parliament, affirmed that the number of burgesses for England and Wales ought not to be reduced—that is to say, that the number for Ireland and Scotland ought to be—and Stanley in reply denounced a mode of arguing which enabled the enemies of the Union to declare that Ireland herself was not adequately represented. It must be remembered that the population of Ireland before the famine and subsequent emigration was enormously larger in proportion than it is now.

After the dissolution Stanley, who had in this short Parliament sat for Windsor, took his father's seat for Lancashire, Lord Stanley being called to the House of Lords; and it is needless to say that a vast majority of Reformers were returned with him. The second reading was carried on July 7 by 136, the third, after ten weeks' fighting in Committee, by 30 fewer. But rejection by the House of Lords, on October 8, was the signal for an attempt at compromise, and for the rest of the year and the early part of the next attempts in that direction went on, Stanley himself being one of the principal agents.

It is, I believe, commonly thought, and it is often said, that the manifestations of popular discontent, after the rejection by the Lords, carried the Bill. There may be some foundation for this, especially as in the Bristol riots, and perhaps elsewhere, there appeared the most alarming of all signs, that of disaffection in the troops appointed to put the riots down. But riots, which were not new things, to a certain extent cut both ways. The agricultural discontent and the crimes of 'Swing' had become very numerous before the introduction of the Bill, and the Whig Government were obliged to prosecute Cobbett for language which was an almost direct provocation to outrage. Moreover, the English country gentlemen had not taken these things with the sluggishness of the French aristocracy forty years before, and the Duke of Richmond, Lord Craven, and many others had, with the help of their own servants and tenantry, and without any from police or soldiers, made examples of the rioters. Such disturbances, too, as those of Bristol were by no means suited to reassure or delight the middle-class supporters upon whom the Government principally leaned, and the Government

itself, being in incumbency of office, was obliged to punish, was held responsible for failure to prevent them, and was at least as much incommoded as assisted by its too zealous friends.

The recess of Parliament was very short, lasting only from October 9 to December 7, and during it Stanley went to Ireland ; but negotiations had already been opened, and they were by no means interrupted by the reintroduction of the Bill on December 13. After a week's debate the second reading was once more carried by 162. During this debate Stanley had a sort of historical duel with Croker, and was much applauded, though history was never his strong point. Indeed, like most Whigs of the generation of his youth, he cared little for it. The majority for the third reading on March 23, two months having been consumed in Committee after the House met again in January, was less (116), but still large, and the second reading in the Lords was carried with the intention, on the part of the Tory peers who voted for it, of inserting in Committee the results of the negotiations which had been going on all the while.

So half-hearted were many of the Whigs, and so vigorous were Stanley's own efforts at a compromise, that one was nearly arranged in May, 1832. The demands which the Tories made and Stanley supported seem singularly moderate now, for their chief points were the limitation of metropolitan districts, and (so quaintly does the whirligig of time behave) a one-man-one-vote clause to shut out borough freeholders from county voting. Lord Lyndhurst's amendment on going into Committee (to take the enfranchisement clauses before the disfranchising) upset the coach. It was carried by 35. How Lord Grey resigned, how the Duke of

Wellington found himself impossible, how the first refusal of the King to consent to the swamping of the peers—a really unconstitutional measure, which unluckily had Tory precedent—was got over, and how the Opposition, not in the most heroic manner, collapsed, are incidents in general English history which are known to everyone. Such incidents are a severe trial to the temper of mediators, and Stanley's temper was never particularly meek. They said that at supper at Brooks' he used the most violent language about the Duke, declaring that he must be a fool if he thought he could get along without a Reform Bill, and that, as he certainly was not a fool, he would bring one in. Let us then, said Stanley, support it, and leave him to the profit and the infamy of success. It is dangerous to use such language in the ear of Nemesis, for she is the most unforgetting and unforgiving of goddesses. I do not know or remember whether anyone in 1867 flung these words at Lord Derby. There must have been no small temptation to do so. For the time the chief inconvenience seems to have been that he was misrepresented as having called the Duke of Wellington a fool.

He was very much more in his element (except that wherever there was fighting to be done he was always in his element) in the important legislative and administrative work which, first as Chief Secretary for Ireland and then as Secretary for the Colonies, he had to accomplish as Lord Grey's colleague. Here too, no doubt, we feel the same want of what may be called a Pisgah sight of politics—of a complete, logically-connected view of all questions that might present themselves. The advocate and, indeed, author of the Church Temporalities Bill incurred blame for want of foresight, if not for actual inconsistency, by resigning on

the proposed Commission to enquire into the same Church's revenues. But in his two great employments he displayed the utmost energy and ability, and accomplished against violent opposition measures which, whatever may be thought of their ultimate consequences, were undoubtedly great and far-reaching. In his later years he was charged, neither quite fairly nor quite unfairly, with a certain amount of indifference, if not of positive restiveness, to the details of administrative and ministerial work. But at this time certainly no such charge could be brought against him. He was, in the language of his own favourite pursuit, a glutton for work, and, taking debate and business together, it may be questioned whether any Minister not actually in command of a Government ever achieved more than Mr. Stanley in the years between and including 1831 and 1834.

There may be said to have fallen upon him as Chief Secretary the entire duty of adjusting the state of Ireland to that first retreat from the Ascendency position which was involved in the granting of Catholic Emancipation. On the one hand, it was evidently impossible, after that measure, to govern Ireland in precisely the same manner as before, On the other, O'Connell and his party were not in the least satisfied, but rather encouraged to pursue the work of Repeal, for which they had, in a phrase famous in similar connection much later, taken their coats off. Again, it was not by any means the intention of the Whig party proper to tolerate agrarian disorder and crime. To meet O'Connell's controlment with controlment on the one hand, and on the other to adjust the Education and Tithe questions as much as possible to the altered condition of things, was Stanley's business, and a heavy business it was.

It has long been the fashion to bestow unstinted praise on the Irish Education Act of 1831 ; and I see that even Mr. Kebbel describes it as 'allowed by friend and foe to have worked the happiest results.' I do not think that anyone who has given special attention to Irish history would now endorse this. The fact is that the scheme (which was only Stanley's in so far that his energy and ability licked it into an administrable shape and drove it through Parliament) was the product of two different forms of that curious Liberal doctrinairism which has nearly died out of late years, but which was all-powerful at the time of the First Reform Bill. The Diffusion-of-Useful-Knowledge idea presided over its purely educational part. On its religious side, which in Ireland was naturally all-important, the latitudinarianism of Whately was the inspiring force. According to these theories, a well-planned scheme of general education (and it is admitted that the Irish scheme was, in point of range and completeness, far better than anything that then existed in England, or even in Scotland) would of itself act as a pacifier and healer of differences. To avoid complaints of proselytism on the one hand, or of 'godless' teaching on the other, religious instruction was to be given to the youth of different faiths by their own pastors, and a sort of undenominational theology was taught in common to those who did not object. The scheme being favoured by Archbishop Murray, the head of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, prospered after a fashion for a time. But its main object - that of appeasing denominational differences—was never attained in the very slightest degree, and the difficulty of maintaining a good standard of normal or training-school instruction under it has always been insuperable. Archbishop Walsh, the actual successor of Archbishop Murray, not long ago made

an attack on the whole plan which has attracted approval from critics who are uncompromisingly opposed to Dr. Walsh's general views on Irish politics. For this, however, Stanley cannot be fairly blamed; his error, such as it was, being one which was universally shared by the Whigs, and largely by the Tories, of his time.

The Tithe question and the still larger one of the Church Temporalities generally next occupied him, and this proved far more thorny. The tactics which have recently become notorious in Wales had been pursued on a far larger scale in Ireland, with the approval of the O'Connellites, and great numbers of the clergy were in a state of utter destitution. In the spring of 1832 the Chief Secretary introduced and carried first a set of resolutions and then a Bill recognising the distress, authorising advances to necessitous clergymen, and empowering the State to levy the arrears directly. This was to have been supplemented in the summer by a set of Bills carrying out the recommendations of Committees of both Houses on the question, legalising a general composition for tithe, and vesting this composition, whether in land or money, in certain ecclesiastical corporations to be created. But only the compounding Bill, which was practically inoperative without the others, was passed before Parliament rose, and the subsequent conduct of the question was not in Stanley's hands, as he exchanged the Irish for the Colonial Office in 1833. He was, however, the deviser and carrier of the Church Temporalities Bill of that year, and here he got himself into the difficulty above alluded to. The Bill reduced by amalgamation the twenty-two Irish sees to twelve, the money saved to be used for augmenting small benefices; and it laid a tax on the future incumbents of benefices over 200*l.* a year to be applied in lieu of Church-

rates. Stanley's principle of the inviolability of Church property, from which he never swerved, was apparently saved by the rigid devotion of that property to Church uses. But there was one clause in the Bill, not as it passed, but as it was introduced, to the effect that the extra fine paid by a leaseholder tenant for renewal in perpetuity might be applied to non-ecclesiastical purposes. This went directly against the principle just mentioned, and it was part of the indifference to logical consistency, so often commented and to be commented on, that Stanley failed to see that the spirit, if not the letter, of the Bill was secularist. So soon as you admit that the State may legitimately (no one denies that it may as a mere exertion of power) take from a freehold benefice the property which has been specially bestowed upon the incumbents by its various founders and benefactors, and bestow it elsewhere on a kind of cy-près theory, you open a very wide door through which all sorts of things and persons may enter. Benefice A, let us say, is over-endowed, and benefice B under-endowed, for the work of this particular kind which it has to perform. You say 'I may surely take from the incumbent of A his surplus to fill up the deficit of B.' But suppose A has too much, all the B's are provided for, and there is no more work of the same kind to do? May you not on the former principle allot the superfluity of A to some other good, though perhaps not precisely similar, purpose? And, yet again, supposing A's incumbent has in your judgment nothing to do at all, may you not abolish him, and apply the whole funds in the same way? I own that, if I myself accepted the first position, I should find myself sorely bested for arguments wherewith to resist the second, and should not be very confident in my power of resisting the third. But Stanley thought otherwise, and, as we shall see,

he very soon gave very solid guarantees of his personal sincerity in thinking so.

The third branch of his Irish business, wherein he had even harder fighting than in either of these, was concerned with what is called, in political slang, Coercion. When he came into office in November, 1830, O'Connell, who had entertained hopes that the Whigs would take him to their arms, began a series of violent attacks on the new Chief Secretary. The great Dan was, in his way, a gentleman: but his way was not that of members of his class in England and it was simply impossible that Stanley and he should get on together. His expressions in Ireland were so outrageous that Stanley challenged him—a challenge which he declined on his usual ground, that he had resolved never to accept one after killing D'Esterre. He could not with equal ease evade the demands of the law; and in January he was arrested and indicted under the Associations Act, which had been a complement of the Emancipation measure. The subsequent proceedings were slightly 'fishy,' and it is not entirely easy to acquit Stanley, if not of participation in, at any rate of connivance at, them. O'Connell pleaded guilty, and was to be called up for judgment on the first day of next term. He was then in London attending Parliament, and the Crown officers agreed to a postponement. Meanwhile the Cabinet had resolved on dissolving Parliament fully a fortnight before the date named, and the Act under which the indictment was drawn expiring in consequence of the dissolution, O'Connell went scot free. Suspicions of collusion had been much earlier entertained, and there was no doubt that O'Connell's support of the Reform Bill was of vital importance to the Government.[1] But, however it

[1] The whole proceedings on O'Connell's trial, and a considerable

might suit Lord Grey's Government to buy the Irish vote, the Whig section of it, at least, had not the slightest intention of granting O'Connell's demands, and between O'Connell himself and Stanley there was war to the knife. The O'Connellites most bitterly opposed his Tithe measures, agrarian crime became worse than ever, and a Peace Preservation Act (to use the exacter and better title) became necessary in 1833. This first-fruit of a reformed Parliament put into Government's hands a weapon even sharper than Mr. Gladstone's. Trial in districts proclaimed as disturbed was by court-martial, and the mere stirring out of doors at night in such districts was a crime. A section in the Cabinet, with Lord Althorp at their head, disapproved of the Bill, and Althorp himself introduced it so feebly that he was suspected of playing booty. Stanley, however, made on the first reading a speech which was immensely admired, and which was of such an uncompromising character that Mr. Speaker Abercrombie is said to have declared that, had he heard it in the unreformed House, he should have gone to bed 'convinced that Stanley would be, and would remain so as long as he pleased, Prime Minister, governing on Tory principles.' The impetus of this and of his subsequent speeches carried the Bill right through in a month.

But even before the third reading Stanley exchanged the Irish for the Colonial Office, either because he himself felt that he had done enough in the former Office, or as a sort of sop to the more Radical members of the party on the part of the Government. Perhaps it was even because there was

extract from Stanley's speech in his own defence, may be found in the second volume of the new series of *State Trials*, edited by Mr. John MacDonell, with the Law Officers' opinions, all complete. I think it was a case of 'riding.'

another tough job to be accomplished in the Office which he now took up. For most members of the Cabinet which reformed Parliament were not ambitious of undertaking difficult questions. This was the West Indian Slavery Abolition Bill, a measure to which *le cant Britannique* made most people declare themselves friendly, but which, in point of magnitude and of the conflicting interests concerned, was no child's play. The circumstances, however, were different from those of the Irish Bills, and required different treatment. Everybody was conciliated all round, and, as popular opinion had, and has it, a magnificent act of justice and self-sacrifice was performed. Or, as a few obstinate devil's advocates preferred, and here and there one still prefers, to say, the British nation flung away twenty millions, beggared many deserving persons, ruined one of the fairest parts of its colonial territory, and rather damaged than improved the prospects and character of the negro race, in deference to the persistent agitation of a certain number of good-hearted and weak-headed fanatics. There is no reason to suppose that in this case any kind of compromise with any principles which Stanley either consciously or unconsciously held was necessary. Lancashire was indeed interested to no small extent in the principle of slave-holding, as was proved by a distinguished person now alive, who entered Parliament in these days, who had much to do with Lord Derby in friendship, and in enmity afterwards, and who has survived him as a political power for a much longer period than that during which Lord Derby preceded him in political life. But his usual indifference to 'Thorough' in politics being granted, there was no reason why Lord Derby should not be an abolitionist. His own order, the agricultural interest, and the Church were the three things to which he

had always looked and did always look. The last of the three entered for hardly anything into the question, and the first two had always looked rather with dislike than otherwise on the colonial magnates, who enriched themselves abroad, and intruded into English life at home. That the Rights-of-Man principle which the objection to slavery implied was essentially revolutionary, and that the deference to a set of faddists who put their fad beyond all things else was a very dangerous precedent, were not things likely to occur to Lord Derby. In regard to the first point, he was at one with most English statesmen, who have never troubled themselves much about principles. In regard to the other, he probably gave never a thought to it. Yet, without considering the justice and wisdom of putting down slavery as such, or the effects of the measure on what had been the richest and most important of English possessions, hardly as yet excepting the other Indies themselves, the thing might have given pause to a politician of a different kind. It was absolutely the first instance of a series which has been perpetually lengthening itself since—the series of movements not properly connected with politics at all, but urged on and brought to completion by the use of political machinery. The ability of a small, or comparatively small, number of determined persons united together to influence the general policy of the whole nation, by exercising a determining force in the constituencies, now first came into evidence. It could not have existed under the unreformed Parliament, though no doubt something similar might have been brought about, with money at command, by intelligent and determined buying of seats. Yet it is to be observed that in the unreformed Parliament there was an obstinate and most healthy prejudice against

any interest which abused these means. In the new constituencies it was perfectly practicable, and has been more and more practised from that day to this. It is not any part of my duty as biographer of Lord Derby to dwell on it longer: it certainly was part of that duty to point out its first emergence and his part in it as an item of his history.

In carrying these measures, and in the fighting work which he had achieved over the Reform Bills, Stanley had thus done vast service to the Whig or Liberal Government and to the Liberal party. No greater service, perhaps, in amount and value has ever been done for a government by a subordinate member of it, or for a party by anyone not its chief, or the leader of either House. It is a dramatic enough fact that this work was done immediately before his severance—a final and complete severance—from Liberal Governments altogether, and before a severance, which, though not immediate, became more and more certain, from the Liberal party. In few cases would this be even possible unless some question of personal rancour entered into the matter. It is not believed that there was any such in the present instance. But, in truth, all great English political movements have been more or less 'leaps in the dark,' and the Reform of 1832 was one of the greatest instances of this. Strange as it may seem, it is perfectly evident that many of the Whig leaders had no distinct idea of the change which their own measures had brought about, till the altered manners of the new House and the character of the measures favoured by the Extreme Left of their own party convinced them. Some of them had no objections to this change; others put their objections in their pockets. But Stanley was not the man to do this, and, as we shall see in the

next chapter, he shortly broke away from the Liberal party for ever.

His connection therewith left, indeed, a great trace on him, and it may be agreed, if anyone likes to say it, that he never again, though he showed constantly increasing power in debate, showed the faculty for hard and constructive Parliamentary work which he displayed during these three or four years. Various causes may be assigned for this, but the fact, I think, is certain. In some sense he may be said to have entered political life entirely anew when he broke adrift; and it is not impossible that his years of unattached membership or 'group'-leading—helped to impress on him a certain free lance character, which marked, more or less strongly, all his later career. Independent and self willed as he was, he was in some ways a man likely to do better work under a commander with whom he thoroughly sympathised, and whom he could thoroughly respect, than as generalissimo. He never had another leader except Peel, whom he despised, and who was afraid of him, and when he himself came into command he had raw troops, and had had no recent experience in leading or even in being led. And so it happens that between his Whig and his Conservative period there is a great gulf fixed, and that in a sense the earlier period hardly belongs to his political life at all. It offers no problems; for, as has been sufficiently pointed out, Whig politics lay in his way, and he found them, and for some time had no temptations to drop them. It exhibits his great eloquence, his bold temper, his manly energies; but only in the close does it exhibit any distinct touch of political principle or character, and then the exhibition shows likewise, by its

inconsistency with his earlier choice of ways, that want of reasoned political faith which was his bane throughout. He could not abandon his honour that he might stay in office; but he need never have taken the office, which he had to abandon to save his honour.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF LORD DERBY'S CONSERVATISM

Stanley's Resignation and the events which led to it—Defence of his conduct—He crosses the House—The 'Derby Dilly'—Criticisms passed on it—His approximation to the Conservatives—Friction between him and Peel—His action as a member of Peel's Government—Called up to the House of Lords—The Corn-law question—Stanley's attitude towards it, and his conduct at the crisis—Should he have taken office?—He is accepted as the Conservative Leader.

The manner in which Mr. Stanley actually parted from the Whigs was on this wise. The account given in the last chapter will show that he had been a very front-fighter in the ranks of the Grey party. But all that party were not equally satisfied with him, nor he with all the party. In fact, the Cabinet could not have been less at one if it had been an avowed coalition. Lord Grey, its head, with whom Stanley was in almost complete sympathy, was an aristocratic Whig, who, though he had carried the Reform Bill and practically revolutionised England, was as little of a Liberal as any man then living. Of those under him, some, such as Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell, were willing to adopt what were already called Radical principles to a very large extent; others, such as Stanley and Graham, were willing to adopt them, but to a very small extent. Already Stanley's strong will, and his value as a fighter, had forced

on the other section Coercion and a treatment of the Irish Church very different from that which they desired. But this section naturally expected to have its turn, and it is by no means improbable that Stanley, who must in two years have had his fill and more of government on reformed principles, had no very great desire to baulk them.

The measures affecting the Irish Church which he had approved had, at least in his view (for, as I have pointed out, he was not too severely logical in taking it), respected the principle that Church property was inviolable and inalienable, though it was within its own sphere transferable and redistributable. The Tithe Bill which his successor at the Castle, Mr. Littleton, introduced in May, 1834, was the occasion on which Lord John Russell, by announcing his adherence to secularisation, upset the coach ('Johnny has upset the coach,' Stanley's whisper to the man who sat next him, became famous, as his offhand sayings often did) of Lord Grey's Government. It was not, however, till somewhat later, the 27th of the month, on the Government acceptance of a motion by Ward, the Radical member for St. Albans, declaring the necessity of reducing and redistributing the Irish Church revenues, that Stanley actually resigned. He was accompanied by Sir James Graham, First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Ripon. The two latter, though men of character and influence, were not of conspicuous ability. Stanley and Graham were by far the ablest men in the Ministry. Gossip, according to Greville, attributed the final impulse rather to Graham than to Stanley; but this is very unlikely. The Church point was one, perhaps the only one, on which Stanley never paltered, hesitated, or changed his mind during his entire political life, and his very impulsiveness made him unlikely to be

influenced by anybody, though there is no doubt that he and Graham in some degree mutually strengthened each other. They were, indeed, to a certain extent alike in being strongly Tory by temperament, in being thrown among the Whigs in early life, and in having accumulated a political record which looks, as it is surveyed, rather inconsistent, not to say rather incomprehensible. But it would appear that the effect which was produced in Stanley by a defect in power of political reasoning on the great scale, was in Graham brought about by an excess of speculative consideration of politics, and an inability to follow a straightforward course without considering too curiously. Indeed Greville himself, after making enquiries, came to the conclusion that Stanley and Graham acted on different principles, the former standing on the pure and simple doctrine of inviolability, while Graham, certainly not without reason, regarded the Establishment chiefly as a bond between England and Ireland. The commentator, naturally enough, expresses his wonder that, having swallowed the camel of Reform, they should strain at the gnats perched on the camel's back ; but these inconsistencies are not rare in politics.

Nemesis was not long in visiting the Rump of the Grey Ministry, and Stanley had no hesitation or false shame about helping her. There was, indeed, no reason why he should have any. His colleagues had been false to him, not he to his colleagues ; and he might justly suspect that something like a plot had been formed against him. Weeks before the actual breach he had offered them his resignation, which they had refused. On June 2, when Ward's motion came on—the Government meeting it with the previous question, but announcing that a commission had been issued for carrying out the purposes of the resolution—Stanley

spoke with considerable acrimony, and as one who had left his late companions for good. He was much cheered by the Tories, to whom indeed the split in the Reform Ministry was almost the first gleam of light in an otherwise hopeless darkness.

But this was as nothing to what he had in store for them. The Rump exhibited greater weakness day by day; Littleton, Stanley's successor in Ireland, showing in particular the most pitiable incompetence as an adversary of O'Connell; and on July 2 Stanley spoke again on the Tithes Bill. This was the famous 'Thimblerig' speech of which almost everybody who can pretend to the slightest acquaintance with politics has heard. Greville, naturally enough, thought it 'virulent' and 'coarse,' and was glad to find a complaisant Tory at the Travellers' who said, 'Of course we cheered him, but I must own it was a very injudicious speech and very unbecoming.' I must own that there are Tories to-day who think it very much the reverse. Greville's solemn reflection is, 'These are the sort of events that influence a man's destiny in life ever after; it is not that his political career will be marred, or that anything can prevent his talents rendering it on the whole important, and probably successful. But there is a revulsion in men's minds about him which cannot fail to produce a silent, but, in the end, a sensible, effect on his fortunes.' And then he tells us that Lord Derby (the grandfather), 'who is a very shrewd and sagacious old man, never would hear of his grandson's superlative merits, and always in the midst of his triumphs questioned his ultimate success.' So likewise, perhaps, did Whittington's grandfather question whether he would be thrice Lord Mayor of London: and yet he was, and Lord Derby was thrice Prime Minister.

I think that if Mr. Burchell had heard Greville's tirade, he would most unquestionably have had recourse to his favourite 'Fudge!' For what were the facts? In a merciless criticism of the Government proposals on Irish Tithes, Mr. Stanley compared them to thimblerigging, and suggested that in the end the Church property would be found to have disappeared altogether like the pea. Is the crime that it was 'low' to mention thimblerigging at all? or is it that it was ungenerous to insinuate dishonesty on the part of his late colleagues? If it is the former, I own myself not superfine enough to share the disgust; but I suppose it is the latter. Now we, who have seen the actual Irish Church surplus of a later day juggled away in exactly the manner that Lord Derby predicted, can hardly say that the suggestion was gratuitous. That it was ungenerous can, I think, only be held by those who carry the doctrine of loyalty to colleagues to a most extreme and, what is more, a most one-sided extent. Let it be remembered that the subject on which Stanley was speaking was the very subject on which, after distinctly shabby treatment by his colleagues, he had resigned; that it was one on which he felt more strongly than on any other, and one with which his whole politics were bound up. He thought that a great mischief was being done, and he hit out at those who were doing the mischief as hard and straight as he could. Happy were the politician who always did the same! How little mere illiberality there was in him, however, may be seen from the fact that, during this very time, he was supporting the Bill for admitting Dissenters to the Universities, though not to the government of them—a reasonable and truly liberal principle, which has been most unfortunately broken through since. And, what is more, he wrote a personal disclaimer

of personal offence to Grey, declaring that he would not take office against him, which promise he kept. The fact was that Grey had his team quite out of hand, and that, after plotting against Stanley, they plotted against Grey himself, and drove him to resign by their disloyal conduct in regard to the Coercion Act. In short, they thimblerigged Grey as they had tried to thimblerig the Irish Church, not, indeed, with Grey's good-will, but with his consent. For politics is in its peculiar way a very moral science, and no more forgives than whist does.

The chief instrument in the treachery which turned Grey out was Brougham, the Chancellor, and he was, perhaps, the most prominent figure in the short Melbourne administration which succeeded Grey's—an eminence for which he paid the price of never being the member of another. It lasted only four months, being upset in consequence of Lord Althorp's promotion by his father's death to the House of Lords. Practically the King turned it out on his own authority, and of his own motion. With these proceedings Stanley had nothing to do ; but it was so evident that the party which had carried Reform had little strength left in them, that everybody acquiesced in the necessity of allowing the Tories to have their turn. So, the Duke of Wellington taking what may be called provisional office, a messenger was sent off to Rome, where Peel was, to see if he would join : and it seems to have been more or less taken for granted that Stanley would join likewise. Peel did join, but Stanley and Graham refused to come in. The 'Tamworth Manifesto,' the programme of Conservatism, was issued. Parliament was dissolved. Peel met the House of Commons with a minority ; the Liberals (for by this time it is absurd to call them Whigs) bought

O'Connell by the Lichfield House Compact, and Lord Melbourne returned to power in less than six months after he had left it. In all these matters Stanley was distinctly an outsider ; but he has been blamed, and that from more points of view than one, for his conduct in regard to them. Sometimes it has been said that, if he had joined Peel, Conservatism would have been at once founded on a solid basis ; sometimes that, if he did not join Peel, he ought to have rejoined the Whigs ; sometimes that his actual conduct was that of a mere free-lance and privateer. The battle of Bosworth was sure to be, and was, cast up against him ; and the precisians were once more offended (he was always offending them) by his observation on the final struggle that Sir Robert 'ought to have died in the open, and not turned up his toes in a ditch.' But he had during this short period formed a considerable party, consisting, no doubt, mainly of men who in the break-up of parties and break-down of Ministries 'did not know what to make of it,' rather than of the adherents of any definite political creed. At their best they mustered some fifty, though, like all intermediate parties of the kind, they were difficult to muster in strength. Their leader had, on the whole, supported the Government very loyally ; but he had not taken a decided line, and in general discourse he suffered for it. His party was called by O'Connell, from a famous passage in the *Anti-Jacobin*, the 'Derby Dilly,' and a feebler joke never was ; for the 'Derby Dilly' carried 'six insides,' and Stanley could have filled that vehicle many times over. Some men thought that he was playing for a return of Lord Grey (with whom he was in nearly complete sympathy), freed from the Radical-Liberals. Some (and Lord Palmerston was among them) thought that he was simply playing a waiting game off and

for his own bat. It would seem that the general opinion at this time was really against him. How far the remarkable discussion of Stanley's character, which Greville says that Sir James Graham held with him just after the resignation of Peel, is genuine, no one can tell. The honestest of men usually in such cases puts a good deal of his own opinion into the mouth of his interlocutor. The details of it will be better considered when we come to sum up. But Englishmen were still quite unaccustomed to third or fourth parties, and they had still not fully realised the effect of the Reform Bill. Shortly afterwards, when the second Melbourne administration had been formed, on July 1, Stanley and Graham, who had hitherto sat with the Whigs, crossed the House, it is said, in consequence of a jeer at Graham—'Why don't you stay there?' when he had gone over to speak to a friend. Greville, and no doubt many others, thought that Stanley was fallen from his high estate. The 'Dilly' was certainly upset, though Stratford Canning, Lord George Bentinck, and one or two others of mark accompanied the leaders.

It appears to me that the unfavourable criticisms passed on Stanley in this free-lance period of his are quite unfounded, and, indeed, I do not see from what point of view they can be consistently urged. He was justified by the event; for nothing is more certain than that Peel and the Conservative party came in in 1841 far stronger for the first abortive attempt. He was justified on the score of personal consistency; for it is certain that those who then and later upbraided him for not joining Peel would have upbraided him far more loudly if—fresh from a Whig Government himself—he had openly coalesced with the Tories. But (and this seems to me of far greater importance than either

of these justifications) he was also justified by the actual and probable state of politics at the time. Although even such acute, though prejudiced, observers as Greville may have failed to recognise, in Greville's own language, the number of 'gnats that were perched on the camel's back,' the mere events which had driven themselves from office must have told such men as Stanley and Graham that they were in a practically unknown region, and must travel with the extremest caution. Nor had the beggarliest elements of a new Tory or Conservative party been as yet got together. That great part of the nation was experiencing a kind of reaction after the Reform advance was certain; but the motive power of that advance itself was evidently not yet expended—it was certainly wise to let it expend itself.

Moreover, it is both unfair and unintelligent to forget that Stanley could not at once sever himself from his old associations and his old prejudices. It is quite true that his natural home was with the Tories. But he had for ten years of Parliamentary life been against them, and he could not make his enemies his friends in a day. Tamworth Manifesto or no Tamworth Manifesto, the new Conservatism was an utterly untried political entity. It was not certain how it would work by itself; it was not certain how far the persons who had to work it would let it work freely and naturally. Even after ten years' trial and five years' triumph, the party was once more to be thrown into an almost helpless condition by the split on the Corn-laws. At this time, when its whole creed and programme were, so to speak, in the air, it was impossible to know what to make of it. Even from the very lowest point of view it was prudent to hold aloof. Had the whole forces of the Tory remnant and the

ci-devant Canningite Whigs gone in together at this time, and (as they certainly would have been) been discomfited, England might have been plunged into Radicalism pure and simple a generation earlier than she actually was. As it was, the Stanley-Graham party, even if for the moment broken up and discredited, remained an untried factor in the question. It was sure to impose a certain check of moderation on the Whigs. It remained a source of possible hope for the Tories. I do not know whether there was any man at the time, except, perhaps, Lord Lyndhurst, on the Tory side, who had acuteness and farsightedness enough to see this, and Lyndhurst may have been too much committed to extreme party ways to see it. But I can quite conceive a Tory with detachment enough advising, from the Tory point of view, exactly the line of conduct which Stanley on this occasion pursued. In fact, I should say that it was very much more defensible than much of his after-conduct. He may have been actuated by the feelings of a guerillero who carries on the 'little war' not merely because he has no chance of carrying on the big, but because his spirit and his abilities are not equal to war proper. But I do not think it at all fair to conclude that he was so actuated; and if there is anything else to be said, it is that he had probably not got over the distrust of Peel from which, even later, he emerged only to relapse into it. They never could have got on well together, and the knowledge that each was the other's only rival in debate in the Lower House may not have exactly contributed to draw them nearer to each other. However this may be, Stanley held aloof, and I repeat that I think he did well.

Still, from the time of his crossing the House, Stanley may be said to have definitely joined the Conservatives,

though still as an unattached and below-the-gangway member of their party.

This membership became by degrees, on the principle of *eadem nolle*, a closer and closer one; so that by the time that the end of his next stage, the period of opposition to the Melbourne Government, was reached, Lord Stanley, as he had been since 1834, naturally took rank as a Conservative, second to none but Peel himself. Nor was this opposition carried on by him in a merely irregular or partisan manner. The business of the Melbourne Government was, it is hardly necessary to say, the application of the remains of the old Reforming spirit, reinforced by the fresh energy given by the recent Whig victory, to the further modification of the institutions of the country in accordance with the New Constitution. If they had not the apparent power of the first Reformed Parliament, they knew better what they meant, and were far more uniform in temper and objects than that Government. The chief representatives of the moderates were Palmerston, who never interfered much out of his own department of Foreign Affairs; and the Prime Minister, whose celebrated laziness worked, no doubt, both ways, but most for righteousness—that is to say, conservation. On the other hand, the business of the Opposition was to master, restrain, and guide Reforming zeal as far as possible; and this Peel and Stanley—the latter working more especially on his old lines of Ireland and the Colonies—did, on the whole, to a remarkable extent. In particular, on the favourite point of alienation of Church revenues, on which he had himself resigned, and which had seemed to be finally lost by the adoption of Lord John Russell's resolutions, Stanley, after three years' hard fighting on the Tithe Settlement, beat the Government completely, extorting from

them abandonment of their projected partial disendowment, in return for a concession on the part of the Opposition in reference to the reform of Irish Corporations.

Before this point had been reached, the necessary dissolution, in consequence of the death of William IV. and the succession of her present Majesty, enabled Stanley to take a further step, and appear as a cordial supporter of Peel. They worked, indeed, during these five years with sufficient harmony together. Stanley made but little opposition to the reforms which redistributed without alienating the property of the English Church ; and indeed they were not out of harmony with the attitude which I have already pointed out as his in these matters. But his position was always Conservative, and when in 1838 the celebrated banquet to Peel at Merchant Taylors' Hall, to which nearly half the House of Commons gave their adhesion, took place, Lord Stanley figured with Graham as foremost among the foremost. The great source of strength which the Whig coalition enjoyed was the Lichfield House Compact, in consequence of which Ireland was governed, 'according to Irish ideas,' nominally by Mr. Under-Secretary Drummond and divers Whig Lords-Lieutenant and Secretaries, but really by O'Connell. Drummond set himself systematically to favour the Roman Catholics and the tenants, to rebuff and damage the 'Garrison' and the landlords, and, being a man of great determination and much ability, he had things pretty much his own way. But Englishmen of both parties did not like that way, and the pursuance of it slowly discredited and weakened the Whigs, till they had hardly anything left to rely on, except the personal sympathies of the young Queen for Melbourne. The beginnings of Chartism, too, inclined the middle classes to the Tory side, and latterly Ministers, Lord Palmerston and

Lord John Russell especially, began to quarrel a good deal among themselves. The rather absurd business of the 'Bedchamber Plot,' though it delayed the Conservative success a little, probably, on the whole, did good by allowing the pear to become ripe. At last, in the summer of 1841, the end came, and a dissolution gave the Conservatives a majority of at least 80. According to the old practice, Ministers did not go out at once, but waited to be defeated on the Address, which they duly were, on August 27, by a majority of 91. Peel was sent for, and the first real Conservative Government came into office.

Few Governments have ever come in with fairer prospects. The delays of the last decade had converted a motley array of nondescripts into a distinct and homogeneous party. They at least appeared to have gained an advantage by dropping the word Tory with its unpopular associations, and substituting that of Conservative, which seemed to mean something, expressed in its apparent meaning the views of all, and was not provocative of prejudice. Their majority was more than sufficient and did not contain any obvious seeds of decay. The personal composition of the Ministry, both for ability and authority, was unusually strong, and, except in the department of Foreign Affairs, far superior to any Ministry that the other side had had or could possibly have got together. Peel, acknowledged to be the best speaker in the Lower House, was First Lord of the Treasury. The Duke held office without portfolio, Lyndhurst was Chancellor, Sir James Graham Home Secretary; Mr. Gladstone came in afterwards, succeeding Lord Ripon at the Board of Trade; Lord Stanley himself returned to his old business of the Colonies.

The most important measure for which he was in this

capacity directly responsible was the Canadian Corn Bill, which reduced the duty to a shilling a quarter. For the question of Free-trade in corn had now—thanks to the exertions, not, it perhaps still needs to be said, of Mr. Cobden, but of Mr. Villiers—become a question on which the great majority of the Whigs were indeed quite at one with the Tories, but which was evidently of importance. Lord Stanley's own principle was simple—protection against foreign, but not against colonial, industry. He was also responsible for a considerable improvement in the system of convict transportation. He continued his old work of defending the Irish measures of the Government, for Ireland was still the point of difficulty. But his stay in the House of Commons, though his father did not die for some years to come, was drawing to a close. In October 1844 he was called up to the House of Lords by the title of Lord Stanley of Bickerstaffe. It was in the Upper House, and not long before the break-up of the Government, that he introduced a measure of Compensation for Tenants' Improvements, founded on the recommendations of the Devon Commission; but this was, perhaps unfortunately, not passed.

The exact reasons for his desiring or accepting premature translation have been rather variously given, and are not, I think, quite certain. Probably, as usual, they were mixed. Greville says that he had taken a disgust to the Lower House (an odd thing, and almost unprecedented, but still possible), also that he fancied his health was failing. It is quite certain that from this time forward his hereditary enemy, as it is called, the gout, came more and more strongly upon him, and that ill-health counted for a great deal in the events of the latter half of his political career. Yet another reason is assigned, to the effect that the Government

found themselves weak in the House of Lords; the Duke's deafness incapacitating him, and the other Conservative peers being unable to make head against Brougham, who was still, though ageing, in his hey-day of mischievous activity. This could have been but a very minor reason; for such debating strength as Stanley's was certain to be of far more value in the Lower than in the Upper House. Probably yet another cause, which has been also suggested, had not a little to do with it—that is to say, that there was friction between Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel, which was at least likely to be relieved by lessened personal contact. As has been remarked more than once, it was impossible that they should get on together. Peel's awkward and ungracious manners, his secretiveness, the elaborate conscientiousness which, as it so often does, took the appearance of want of straightforwardness, were certain to rub Stanley the wrong way. Besides, there is very little doubt that Peel, who was very much given to magnify his office, and unnecessarily conscious of being a *parvenu*, was chafed at the social superiority of his official inferior, and at the careless easy ways which Lord Derby never discarded with equal or unequal. Nor can it be much doubted that this same feeling was an influence, though a minor influence, in the final breach. But this breach was not yet, and for another eighteen months or two years Stanley fought the battles of the Conservative party with hardly less vigour, though in a less exciting atmosphere, than before. On the first question which caused some dissension in the Peel Ministry, the Maynooth Grant, he had no scruples; it was the Corn-laws and the Corn-laws only which brought about the final trouble. This trouble (the rest of the Ministry following Peel, but a great majority of the party staying with

Stanley) broke up the party itself, deprived it of almost all the men of experience available for the Lower House, and kept it out of office, except as a struggling, and at first hopeless, makeshift for nearly thirty years.

The immediate events which led, not merely to Stanley's resignation—for the whole Government resigned—but to his severance from his colleagues, may be given shortly. The circumstances which induced Sir Robert Peel to take up the question are generally known. Of the causes, the Irish famine is the cause most in favour, though not with me. But, as this part of the matter concerns Peel and not Stanley, I need only say that, as in the case of other sudden changes, both of Peel's earlier and of other Ministers later, the feeling that something must be done to secure the continuance of a majority was, no doubt, really the motive. At any rate, on November 1 a Cabinet Council was held, and Peel proposed the suspension of the Corn-laws. The Cabinet was much divided. Shortly afterwards Lord John Russell published a letter advocating Repeal, pure and simple; Peel resolved not to be outbid, and all his colleagues but Stanley agreed with him. It seems that Stanley himself would now have accepted the suspension on a promise of reimposure. Partly because of this action, partly because he could not very well do otherwise, Peel resigned. Lord John was sent for, and failed to form a Government; Stanley was asked to form one, and declined. Then, in the Duke's memorable phrase, they 'all shuffled back again at the Queen's command,' Stanley remaining in company with himself, his honour, and the remnant of the Conservative party. It was not then customary for subordinate members of a Ministry on resigning to make Parliamentary explanations in such a case; and it does not seem that he made any public utterance

on the subject till May 26, when the Bill came up to the Lords. The speech that he then made was, by consent of friends and foes, magnificent. Lord Palmerston and others thought it his very finest. It was in a tone more moderate, and also much more stately, than most of his speeches, and the description which it contains of the English squirearchy, and its connection with Protection, is not only a fine piece of oratory ; it is an historical document and *point de repère*.

On the general principle of the Corn-law business it is not my duty to say much here. Lord Melbourne's outburst to the Queen—'Ma'am, it's a damned dishonest act'—saves all trouble on that point to people who are not ashamed of an old-fashioned plainness of speech and thought. But Lord Stanley's position in regard to it requires some discussion, and even a good deal. He has been blamed, I believe, on three different heads—first, for objecting to the removal of the corn duties ; secondly, for not, with the rest of his colleagues, waiving his objections after Lord John Russell's declarations ; thirdly, for refusing to attempt the formation of a Government for no better reason than that he 'should have no colleagues.' Each of these, I think, deserves and, indeed, requires some little examination. Generally speaking, there has been no tendency to blame him much on the third head, on which I think myself he was most to blame. But there has been—owing to the general custom of accepting Free-trade as something sacred, and to the particular fact that the Peelite party and the Liberals have between them almost divided historical writers of influence—a considerable tendency to blame him on the two first, on which I think he was thoroughly right. In particular, it has been asserted that Stanley, as an old Canningite who accepted the views of

Canning and Huskisson on Free-trade, as the recent proposer and carrier of the remission of the corn duties to the only one of the colonies which was at that time a producer of corn on any large scale, had no right to oppose repeal. It has even been pretended that he, as a Lancashire territorial magnate in expectancy, had a mean and petty jealousy of the Cotton Lords, who were the principal advocates of the measure.

There seems to have been really some doubt in men's minds whether Stanley had an honest objection to the repeal of the duties. His earlier utterances before the great May speech, referred to above, were somewhat ambiguous, and his antecedents on the question were, as has been said, ambiguous likewise. But the fact is that, as everybody who has studied the question knows, no great matter ever burst so suddenly on the public as this Corn-law one. A twelvemonth before Peel's *volte-face* it was hardly a practical question at all, though one which was persistently brought before Parliament by private members. Nor do I suppose that Lord Stanley had any great tenderness for Protection in itself. He saw, no doubt, what has been amply proved since, that the abolition of it would do more to change the social as well as the political aspect of England than even Reform. He saw, what has also been amply proved since, that it would be a severe, if not a fatal, blow to the private interests and public influence of the country gentlemen of whom he was the natural leader. But he probably saw at the same time that the taking of such a momentous step for no better ostensible reason than that of a passing Irish famine was illogical and dangerous. And he saw most of all that the taking of it by a Minister and a Government pledged to the hilt to the country party, as Peel and his Government were,

and in direct counter-bidding to an Opposition bid, was, in the language which I have just borrowed from Lord Melbourne, 'a damned dishonest act.' Now, I defy anybody to prove personal dishonesty in any one instance against Lord Derby. Even where I think he was most wrong, as in the cases of the refusal to take office in 1855 and of the changes in the Reform Bill of 1867, his personal honour is untouched. The personal honour of every man in the Cabinet who helped Peel in the autumn and winter of 1845 seems to me, on the other hand, to be in need of a good deal of advocacy. If they were all converted in a lump, it was their business to let their party know this strange and unprecedented getting of salvation; and they did not. The Duke may stand out of the indictment because the Duke's code of behaviour in these matters was an individual privilege, and was recognised as such by the whole nation. Not another man escapes except Stanley, and he could only escape by the course he took. His old commendations of what Peel had done in the Emancipation business were, of course, cast up against him, and could not fail to be so cast. Nor do I think it very important or very possible to show that Peel was more or less guilty on one occasion than of the other of treachery to his party. Except for debating purposes, the *tu quoque* is generally acknowledged to be the weakest of arguments; and, besides, it must be remembered that a man may condone a course of conduct in another without being prepared either to condone it again or to imitate it himself.

But I do think he incurred just blame in refusing to attempt the formation of a Ministry, and that this, with his two other refusals in 1850 and 1855, justifies the charge of 'timidity as a leader' which has been brought against him. In

some respects the 1845-6 opportunity was the best of all. The great majority of the Tory party were indeed thirsting for just revenge on the Minister who had betrayed them. But they were perfectly ready to hold together as a party, and not yet disarrayed, and almost disbanded, as they subsequently became. Nothing but the great authority of the Duke gave Peel any influence at all in the House of Lords. Stanley, as not himself yet committed to Protection pure and simple, might easily have prevailed on the Protectionists to accept a modification without a total abolition of the duties. Even if the Whigs and Peelites (the latter in the case supposed an army mainly composed of officers) had combined, the Conservatives might have made some fight, and would have gone to the country with a good cry and a sound reputation. Moreover, Stanley was certainly too much scared by the fear of having no colleagues. It is believed that Palmerston was by no means indisposed to join, and his junction would certainly have been a signal for some other of the less Radical Whigs to follow. It seems very probable that some of the Peelites who had disliked Free-trade not less, if not more, than Stanley did, would have repented and returned to their first works, as they could have done without loss of credit before the personal onslaughts made on their leader later. At any rate, I do not think the game was at all hopeless. More than ten years—nearly fifteen indeed—of warfare had made a party which it was a pity to throw away ; and the best chance of not throwing it away was to keep it at least nominally together.

However, Lord Stanley thought differently, and it is far easier to blame him after the event than to say that he ought to have undertaken a venture which would have been one of the boldest in the history of English politics. At any

rate, this was *the* turning point of his career, far more so than his departure from the Whigs ten years earlier. Henceforth he was the evident and inevitable leader of the Conservative party. They could not do without him, and he could not do without them. But the heritage at first certainly looked as deserving of the adjective *damnosa* as any that man ever succeeded to. Nor could the whole situation be matched for strangeness. Here was a great party which, after governing England for forty years and meeting one huge downfall, had apparently picked itself up, and gained a better position than ever. It had a clear majority, a singularly able staff, a fairly triumphant foreign policy, the best finance that living memory had known. And all at once it found itself, not merely disunited and shorn of its strength, but deprived, it may almost be said, at once of its leaders and its creed, of its hold on power and its opportunities of regaining it. It was not a case of the common metaphor of a branch falling or being torn off; the whole head of the tree, as sometimes happens in the case of too cunningly grafted ones, was suddenly blown away. And the only chief left, the only possible helper, organiser, worker, was a man who was himself a comparatively recent recruit, who had been brought up in the opposite camp, and who, though now, not only thoroughly, but genuinely, orthodox on the new Tory creed, and at all times much of a Tory in heart, had inherited an inbred want of familiarity with the old Tory sentiment, and was likely, though not to repeat the action of Peel, to do things which Tories could hardly like. It may be added that this man was not experienced in actual party leadership himself, was in some respects not very well fitted for it, had, though it was not generally known, lost the first fervour of his interest in

politics, and was, as he would himself have said, a little touched in the wind as regards physical powers.

In so singular a state of things it is not surprising that the party took a long time to form itself under him. Even on February 19, the day after his first speech against Peel's Bill, he told Lord Malmesbury that he was disinclined at present to take the lead of the agricultural party. Some three weeks later, however, a meeting of peers was held at the Duke of Richmond's. A letter was read from him advising on the course to be taken against the Bill and promising his support to the Protectionists. He was there formally accepted as leader, was informed of this by Lord Malmesbury himself and Lord Eglinton, who had been elected Whips, and was 'very much pleased and flattered.' When this leaked out, it caused great excitement among the Peelites, and Lord Malmesbury gives a very amusing account of Mr. Sidney Herbert's rage. On the 21st of the same month Stanley, so to speak, hoisted his flag by presenting some motions against the Bill. The party in the Commons was meanwhile regimented under Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli, though it can hardly be said to have been finally or regularly constituted. During the short and animated session which ended by the throwing out of Peel's Coercion Bill (on the very same day that the Corn Bill passed), it had practically taken shape. For the rest of his life Lord Stanley, by that name or by the name of Lord Derby, in office, in opposition, or in retirement, was the head of one of the two great parties in England.

CHAPTER IV

IN OPPOSITION

The Protectionist Opposition, its difficulties and disorganisation—Stanley as a mediator and referee rather than an active leader—He is again offered office, and again refuses, after making an attempt to form a Government—Succeeds to the Earldom—Is sent for a third time and accepts—Some weak points of his as Party Leader.

Something has been said at the end of the last chapter of the events of the first half of 1846, during which English parties were in such a state of disorganisation and topsy-turvydom as had never been seen before and has hardly been seen since. This was the period of the famous and very well-deserved attacks of Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli on Peel in the House of Commons—attacks which were received either with positive delight or with silent satisfaction by the great majority of his party, but with which Lord Stanley, even allowing for the fact of his not being in the House, had nothing to do. Nor, indeed, did the formal election on the part of the Peers, the recommendation of the Duke of Wellington, and the obvious necessity of the case, produce complete effect till after Peel's second resignation in the summer. Even then the condition of the party which Stanley was to lead, though sufficiently disorganised, was not quite so dismal as it became after the dissolution

next year, which was the result of Lord John Russell's succession to Peel. This Ministry (which lasted nearly six years and, therefore, very nearly the full term of an English administration at its luckiest since the first Reform Bill) was another instance of the oddities of party government. Perhaps it also showed the mistake which Stanley had committed in not taking the bull by the horns six months before. At that time Lord John seemed to have at least as little chance of staying in as Stanley could have had, and while the Whigs only got on by reason of the irreconcilable hatred between betrayers and betrayed among the Tories, Stanley would have had a chance of attracting to his own side, not only the great majority of the Conservatives, but a solid Whig section of the Palmerston type.

However, as it was, the Peelites could not very well make much opposition to the Government, whose clothes they had stolen, and the Protectionists would do nothing, even if they had been strong enough, that might have put Peel back into power. And so an insignificant minority was able to govern easily in face of one of the strongest majorities that Minister ever had. They had, however, as governments in such a position must have, some narrow squeaks, and were naturally encouraged by the divisions on the other side to try to secure a working majority of their own. They were probably strengthened rather than weakened by the acerbity with which the new leaders, or sub-leaders, of the Protectionists attacked their own late chiefs. Altercations, moreover, carried on in the usual awkward way between members of the two Houses, broke out between Lord George Bentinck and Lord Lyndhurst. This matter concerned Lord Stanley rather closely, though he acted the part of peacemaker, not that of makebate. In the spring

while the arrangements for reconstructing the party were still incomplete, Lyndhurst, no doubt with the best intentions, set himself to work to 'bring the two parties together,' writing to that effect to Lord Stanley, and offering his own mediation between Lord George Bentinck and Stanley himself. He had not counted either with the intensity of the feeling against all members of Peel's Government, who had followed Peel in his change of front, or with the undercurrent of distrust which (rather undeservedly as far as one can see) accompanied himself through life. Lord George replied, with something beyond the retort courteous, that 'he himself was already in cordial co-operation with Lord Stanley.' He observed in effect that Lord Lyndhurst had better mind his own business; and in the summer he attacked the ex-Chancellor's exercise of patronage only less virulently than he had attacked Peel himself. But Lord Stanley preserved friendly relations with Lyndhurst throughout, and towards the close of the year wrote him an elaborate letter of soothing. It may be mentioned, by the way, that during this year, 1846, there was added to the House of Lords a member who was destined to be on unusual terms, both of friendship and enmity, with Lord Derby—Samuel Wilberforce, the then new Bishop of Oxford.

In the early months of 1847 the awkwardness of the situation rose to its greatest height. Stanley was able to threaten, if not actually to show, a majority in the Lords, and in the Commons Peel's party were affronted by the attitude of the Government towards the Protectionists, whom the Whigs were not strong enough to set at nought. The Spanish Marriage affair and other things had also created difficulties, and the one really strong man of the Cabinet—Palmerston—was headstrong and thoroughly in-

subordinate. The dissolution of 1847, however, placed them in a much better position ; for the Conservatives had to go to the country as a house hopelessly divided against itself, without a programme, without a leader, without a prospect. In such circumstances, though there might in any case have been a Free-trade majority, Protection could hardly be said to make a fight at all, and the Protectionists proper came back diminished in numbers and dispirited to the last degree. They quarrelled among themselves, too, and the revolutions abroad and the Chartist movement at home rallied everyone in 1848 to the support of Government, whatever it might be.

During all this discomfortable time, racing, his own happy disposition for not taking things too seriously, and even his frequent fits of the gout, probably stood Lord Stanley in better stead than any consolations of philosophy could have done. In the Lower House he would have either brought the Protectionists into some order or have found things unbearable. In the Upper he contented himself with beating up the Government quarters from time to time on this subject or that—occasions on which they were generally saved by the Peelite peers from what was still a disagreeable thing, a defeat in the Lords. It seems to be entirely unknown when he was first thrown into close relations with Mr. Disraeli, whom at the time of Peel's conversion he had not, I believe, even known.[1] But he was

[1] It is said that while Lord Stanley was still in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli once asked and obtained from him permission to speak when Stanley himself was going to do so. But every instructed reader of that most extraordinary of political biographies, the *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, must have felt that an uninstructed reader would hardly suppose Lord Stanley to have played a remarkable part in politics at all. There is a brief and decent account of his conduct

training some young horses (especially Lord Malmesbury, with whom he was very intimate) in the Peers. Meanwhile, Greville, in February 1848, was pleased to think that 'the egregious folly of Stanley's conduct' was the cause of all manner of evils—evils which, and their connection with Stanley's conduct, he has unluckily omitted to point out distinctly. But Greville's competence may be judged from the fact that shortly afterwards he thought Peel might and ought to return to office, though Graham, the ablest of the Peelites, pointed out to him that this was simply impossible. Greville wanted Peel to join the Whigs, not seeing, what Graham doubtless did see, that at that moment, at any rate, such a proceeding would merely strengthen the Conservatives. One of the most effective of Stanley's razzias on the Government was delivered on the subject of Palmerston's cool mandate to the Queen of Spain to change her Ministers.

It is rather difficult to decide whether the strange and sudden death of Lord George Bentinck in September 1848 was a misfortune or an advantage to the Tory party. It is certain that without him they would have been practically leaderless in the Lower House; for Mr. Disraeli had not yet consideration enough to lead by himself, and no one else had either the ability or the authority. Lord George's bulldog courage (as his cousin Greville, who knew him, hated him, and admired him, calls it) could never have been more in place than in these difficult circumstances. The punish-

at the actual crisis in the winter of 1845, and later there is a passing and cautious reference to his having refused to form a Ministry. Elsewhere he is not, so far as I can remember, even mentioned, and nobody who did not know would, from this *Life*, suppose or guess that Lord George was, as we know he was, in constant and cordial co-operation with Lord Stanley. But, after all, this is only one of the oddities in one of the oddest of books.

ment which he administered to Peel soothed and cheered the party, kept them together, and as far as possible kept up their spirits. But, despite the immense energy and the capability which he showed in these last three years of his life, it is difficult to believe that he could have made a good permanent leader of the party, still less of the House. Difficulties must have almost certainly arisen between him and Mr. Disraeli—difficulties, as I think, though they were old and good friends, between him and Lord Derby. He was essentially the chief for the circumstances in which he actually led, but the best of his work was done by the time when he died.

Early in next year an incident occurred which was of some importance. Lord Auckland died, and Lord John Russell offered the Admiralty to Graham, long the closest of Stanley's political associates, and now the chief of the Peelites next to Peel himself. After some consideration Graham declined, and the junction of the Peelites and Whig-Liberals was postponed for some years longer. The position, if Graham had accepted, would have been something like that created when Mr. Goschen was admitted to a Tory Government, with the difference—an important one doubtless—that as yet the Peelites and Whigs were rather united in attack than in defence. Probably this attempt to coalesce with the Peelites enraged the Protectionists, for the session of 1849 was opened with a double-barrelled attack in both Houses. Lord Stanley in the Lords, and Mr. Disraeli in the Commons, moved an amendment to the Address, condemning in the most sweeping manner the conduct of the Government in foreign, financial, and commercial affairs, with especial reference to the depression of the agricultural and colonial interests. It was lost in the

Lords by two, owing, Lord Malmesbury says, to the Duke of Wellington's action. If we may believe others, it was an instance of Lord Stanley's characteristic heedlessness ; for he declared that his own amendment had no reference to foreign affairs, when its second line specified them. In the Commons a division was not taken, and the Protectionists were still anarchic. Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Herries, and Lord Granby were rivals for the leadership, and Lord Stanley at first favoured Herries, the only one who had any official experience. A sort of leadership in commission was attempted, but of course fell through, and in a few days Disraeli was practically leader.

The effects of his combined astuteness and courage were soon felt. A fresh attack was made by him in March, while foreign affairs gave Lord Stanley frequent opportunities, and by the end of the spring the possibilities of a Stanley Government began to be freely talked of. It was also understood that he had now changed his mind as to the propriety of accepting office. In May he came out in great force on the Navigation Bill with one of his very best speeches. His chances, too, were improved by an apparent disposition to coalesce on the part of Lord Aberdeen, the chief of the few Peelite peers—a man not of the first ability, but of very high character, possessing an intimate knowledge of home and foreign politics for a long time back, and personally liked by all classes from the Court downwards. But in the beginning of next year it was seen that Protection itself was a cock that would not fight. The amendment of the party was lost by nearly fifty even in the Lords ; in the Commons by 119. They were much more fortunate on other matters, and even on Protection itself a little disguised. A few weeks after the first defeat, a motion by Mr. Disraeli

to revise the Poor-laws so as to afford agricultural relief was defeated by 29 only in a large house: while, in the Lords, Stanley had taken up the Dolly's Brae affair (the dismissal of Lord Roden and other magistrates for taking part in an Orange procession), on which he spoke very well, though no division was taken. But his greatest display at this time was later, in June 1850, on the subject of the hectoring conduct of Palmerston to Greece in the Pacifico matter. It was made in concert with Aberdeen, and resulted in a majority of 37 against the Ministers. The Government seriously thought of resigning, but stayed in, and were to a certain extent comforted by a majority of 46 in the Lower House, on a motion of Mr. Roebuck's designed to support Palmerston. A few days afterwards the death of Sir Robert Peel removed another great difficulty in the way of the reconstruction of the party. In the autumn came the 'Papal Aggression,' the Durham Letter, and in February 1851 Lord John Russell's resignation.

Then Lord Stanley had his second offer of office, and again refused, not, however, without making real efforts to form a Government, so that this time no blame could be thrown on him. Now was seen the depth of the Peelite split, and now, too, the incapacity and inexperience which marked the Protectionist party proper. Lord Derby failed to secure the support of Lord Aberdeen, who had been sent for by the Queen in the first place, and other Peelites, though not all, were equally recalcitrant, Mr. Gladstone even refusing the leadership of the House of Commons, in which Mr. Disraeli, who was extremely eager that the experiment should be tried, was ready to make way for him. It is said that Lord Stanley was not himself displeased at his failure, and it is certain that the refusal of the Peelites to return

was less the cause of this failure than the pusillanimous and unworthy conduct of his own party. The circumstances are now fully known from Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs. Stanley was twice sent for, an attempt being made by Lord John Russell in the interval to coalesce with the Peelites. After a similar failure on his part, Lord Stanley summoned all the chiefs of his party. Mr. Herries—an old man, and out of practice in affairs—seems to have been lukewarm, though not exactly timid; Mr. Henley made constant objections, and it would appear from Greville (though Lord Malmesbury does not say so) that Mr. Walpole also made difficulties, while he and Mr. Henley were certainly anti-Protectionist. It need only be added that Mr. Henley, though a most estimable man, was of very narrow brains, and that Mr. Walpole lived to afflict the Tory party with the very worst Home Secretary at a pinch ever known.

Lord Stanley's explanation in the House of Lords was generally approved. It may be that, if he had not himself been somewhat disinclined to take office, he would not have been able to carry off the matter with such perfect nonchalance. But as it was he gave no handles that he was not prepared to make very hot ones for anyone who took hold of them, and the speech, without insult to anybody, contained a certain amount of gentle sarcasm on those of his own party who had stood in the way. It contrasted most remarkably with the harangues with which, in season and out of season, Peel had sickened the House of Commons for years past. Here Greville writes one of the sentences which make one forgive him a great deal:—'He tried everything and everybody, as I believe, without the desire or the expectation of succeeding, and his conduct seems obnoxious to no reproach.'

In other words, Lord Stanley had this time played the game and had lost only through bad cards. Lord John was sent for once more, and, to quote the same authority again, 'came back with his whole crew, and without any change whatever.' But Stanley was immensely strengthened. True, his party had not cut a very good figure before the country, but he and Mr. Disraeli, whose unpopularity, not in one quarter only, was part cause of the failure, were without reproach, and they went on. The rest of the session was a session of sufferance. Nobody wanted to turn the Government out, nobody had any interest in turning them out, but Mr. Disraeli never lost an opportunity of putting them to their paces. In April Greville had his famous meeting with Stanley at Newmarket, and was shocked by finding him in the midst of a crowd of the ring laying Lord Glasgow wagers that he would not sneeze, however much snuff he took. In June following his father died, and he became, what he is to history, Lord Derby.

In September Lord John made yet another offer to Graham in hopes of strengthening his tottering Government, an offer which was again refused by that very singular politician, and the Ministry, in despair, began to entertain thoughts of throwing a new Reform Bill as a sop to the Radicals. But the end was otherwise. The latest of Palmerston's many *fredaines* in the Foreign Office—his condoning the Second of December off his own bat and without even consulting his colleagues—following on the heels of an almost equal indiscretion in his patronage of Kossuth, was too much. He had to leave the Foreign Office just before Christmas, and by the New Year fresh and desperate attempts were made to induce the Peelites to come to Lord John's rescue. They failed, and Palmerston's

revenge was quick and complete. On February 16 he moved and carried, by a majority of 9, an amendment on the Militia Bill. Lord John at once resigned, and Lord Derby was sent for. He hesitated no longer, formed a Government, and made a statement of policy on the 27th, four days after Parliament had been informed of the resignation of the previous Ministry. The period of purgatory (in the sense of exclusion from office) for the Tory party was over. They now had to undergo the more trying trial of accession to office with untried troops and leaders, with a programme as yet almost entirely unformed, and in a minority for many long years. They never fully emerged from this further period of trial in Lord Derby's lifetime, but without him they would probably have remained in the wilderness almost indefinitely. Nothing but his commanding position in certain respects could have covered the defects of Mr. Disraeli in the same respects, though it may be fairly granted that nothing but Mr. Disraeli's talents could have prevented Lord Derby himself from meeting the more lamentable fate of Melbourne.

A very few remarks on this middle period of Lord Derby's life may be permitted, and indeed required. It must have been a very remarkable period in any man's history. He had had, in the space of six years and a few days, the government of England offered to him on three several occasions. He had refused it twice. He had accepted it the third time. Left at the beginning almost totally adrift and apparently helpless, he had succeeded, not indeed entirely by his own exertions, in creating a powerful, if not a prevailing, party. Nor had his conduct during this period, as it seems to me, been open to any fair reproach, unless it be that initial one of not at once stepping into the breach

which Peel had made, and, were it but with men of straw for colleagues, trying to do in the day what was in the day's work. In what was called, and is still sometimes called, his unscrupulous warfare both against the Whigs and against Peel I can see nothing but fair party give-and-take. If Peel got little mercy or consideration from him, he deserved none from Stanley's own point of view, while Lord John's Government was one notoriously contemptible, to friends and foes, except for Palmerston's foreign policy, which was not quite so masterly as it was masterful. On the second occasion when Stanley was called to the helm he made a manful effort to take it, and on the third he actually did so.

Yet his difficulty, both on this occasion and on the former, was, no doubt, in a certain degree due to his own fault. During his whole official lifetime, except during the period when he and Graham drove the 'Dilly,' he had an apparently insurmountable and a most fatal objection to perform that part of the duty of a political leader which consists in acquainting himself with the rank and file of his party, and so ascertaining who are fit to be more than rank and file. Even Peel, stiff and ungracious as he was in private manners, had known how to select, and in a singular way to attach to himself, the talent of his party. Lord Derby, with free, open, and almost hail-fellow-well-met manners, a lover of hospitality too, never could or would do anything of the kind. Had it been otherwise, he could not have failed in the five years of waiting to get together a much better team than that, respectable and unduly depreciated as it was, with which he actually undertook his task. One other thing has to be said, which may be best said in a most characteristic anecdote of Lord Malmesbury's. Only three days before

that motion of Palmerston's which put the game in his own hands, Lord Malmesbury called on Lord Derby, and says that he found him without his usual energy, and quite knocked down by the threatened Reform Bill, for which he was not in the least prepared. Lord Malmesbury was very anxious that he should meet it by a counter bill or resolution; but 'he will not hear of it,' and 'treated Disraeli coldly when he proposed it.' So much so, indeed, was this the case that Lord Malmesbury began to reflect on the serious consequences that a mutual dislike between the two leaders might have, and could only trust in Disraeli's 'good temper and ambition' to prevent it.

His trust was well founded; but in this anecdote all the germs of the failures of 1852 and 1859, the *rifiuto* of 1855, and the leap in the dark of 1867, may, I think, without too much fancifulness, be discerned. Lord Derby had lost his youthful energy, and he had not outgrown his youthful waywardness and habit of acting by fits and starts, his uncertain attitude as to Reform, or his inability to adjust himself to things and persons, and, if necessary, stoop to conquer. He had now, at last, the ball at his feet; we shall see how these drawbacks affected his game with it.

CHAPTER V

FIRST MINISTRY

The composition of the First Derby Ministry—Its brief existence Continued attempts of Lord Derby to conciliate the Peelites—Negotiations with Palmerston—Discussion of conduct towards Protectionists—Lord Derby elected and installed at Oxford.

It used to be, and to some extent still is, the custom to speak of the Derby Ministry of 1852 as a sort of Cabinet *pour rire*, backed up by a contemptible party in the Lower House, and further discredited by dishonest coquetting between Protection and Free-trade, and a more dishonest abandonment of the former. I remember being impressed with this to begin with, and finding, to my very agreeable surprise, when I looked into the matter, that there was scarcely a tittle of evidence to support it. The fact is that for some five-and-twenty years—the third quarter of this century—the Peelite and Liberal parties had the higher newspaper press almost to themselves, and could count a considerable majority among the writers of books. The Peelites in particular had very nearly 'nobbled' the ablest and most influential newspapers in the first half of this time. They were strong on the *Times*. They bought and worked to their very considerable pecuniary loss, but with no small effect, the *Morning Chronicle*, and when the

Morning Chronicle failed, its staff and much of its influence and spirit found a new home in the *Saturday Review*. On the other hand, the old Tory generation of writers was dying off. For some considerable time nobody came on to succeed them, and the jokes of *Punch* about 'Mrs. Gamp' and 'Mrs. Harris' were not unjustified. A beginning of justice was done to this administration when the publication of Lord Malmesbury's 'Memoirs of an ex-Minister' showed that the favourite butt of the whole was a most agreeable, if rather incorrect, writer, a diplomatist who, if he came late into the lists, managed to tilt with very old hands, and not be upset, and a remarkably sensible man.[1] Indeed, as one looks over the list, the jokes of the day (which Lord Derby countered in one instance in the crushing fashion to be noticed later) seem foolish enough. Of Mr. Walpole, indeed, it is impossible to say any good thing, except that he had the best intentions. Mr. Herries was perhaps past work and out of place among the new faces; but he had plenty of experience. Mr. Henley's invincible honesty was greater than measures of the same quality which have been, and to this day are, held to excuse even smaller intellectual powers than his in Ministers; and Lord Hardwicke, Lord Lonsdale, Lord Salisbury, and the Duke of Northumberland were at least as good padding as is usual in Ministries. On the other hand, the Prime Minister was the first debater in the House of Lords, and the equal of any in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli was Mr. Disraeli. Few Govern-

[1] Palmerston, who was a kind of neighbour of Lord Malmesbury's, and knew him well, declared that for all his want of experience and his incorrect style, he was a 'very clever man,' and this is the more important because Palmerston's phrase about there being only two 'real men' in the 1852 Ministry seems to have been the origin of the joke which recoiled (see *infra*) on Lady Clanricarde.

ments have had better law officers[1] than Lord St. Leonards, Sir Frederick Thesiger, and Sir Fitzroy Kelly. Major Beresford and Sir John Pakington were very fair administrators, and as for the present Duke of Rutland, all I can say is that the late Lord Houghton once described him to me as either 'the only stainless politician I know,' or 'the most stainless politician I know'—I am not certain which.

This Government, the worst to be said against which was that it was inexperienced, remained in office for almost exactly a year. Perhaps, in sober seriousness, they committed but one fault—the fault of not dissolving immediately, going to the country on the two planks of 'stemming the tide of democracy' (Lord Derby's words in the Lords), and a moderate duty on corn, and abiding by the issue. That they did not do this was—after the event, rather than before—cast up against them. But there was a great deal of excuse for it, even apart from the fact, which ought never to be forgotten, that the hard-and-fast adjustment of tenure of Ministry to possession of Parliamentary majority was by no means yet established. Had it been, very few Ministries from 1832 to 1868 could have stayed in, and it does not seem quite clear why Lord Derby should not have the benefit of a license of which many of his contemporaries profited.

There were, no doubt, several reasons against a dissolution very early in 1852. Dissolutions in the spring are always awkward, as interfering with necessary routine work. The situation of foreign affairs made the presence of Lord Malmesbury, who was a personal friend of Louis Napoleon,

[1] Lord Lyndhurst had refused both the Chancellorship and a place in the Cabinet without portfolio, owing to his age and infirmities; but he was still a great power in debate.

convenient, and there was no apparent dislike to the Government in the actual House of Commons. It carried a Militia Bill by 150, and rejected the extension of the Ten-pound Franchise to counties by more than a third of that number. But it was less lucky on a proposal to reform piecemeal in the old style, by giving to Yorkshire and Lancashire the members set free by the disfranchisement of Eatanswill (which men call Sudbury) and St. Albans for corruption. The appearance of playing fast and loose with Protection did it no good, and though Lord Derby is said to have expected a majority when the elections came off in July, few of his colleagues agreed with him. The actual result was unluckily one which could not have been better arranged to fix the Government in their ambiguous position. The Conservatives came back as the strongest party in the House by far, mustering a compact three hundred or thereabouts, whose loyalty was not affected by the Protection difficulty, or even by the subsequent introduction of an anti-Protectionist Budget. The two branches of the Liberals—Whigs and Radicals—were on anything but good terms with each other, and did not when combined reach the Conservative total. The thirty or forty Peelites, and the forty or fifty of the Irish brigade, thus held the key of the position. If both joined the Opposition, Government was lost; but it by no means followed that, even in that case, any other Government could come in with a much more stable position. Moreover, Lord Derby had himself from the first, and even before he took office, distinctly defined his position, which was to go to the country and take its voice. He did so, and the country returned a voice which was pretty decided against Protection, but by no means decided against his Government. Therefore he committed the mis-

take of staying in and waiting to be beaten on the Budget, which he was by 305 to 286.

The interval had been filled with attempts at fusion which might perhaps have been better spared. It seems that the Peelites would have come in supposing Protection to be dropped and Palmerston to have received the leadership of the Commons; but to this last arrangement, though Mr. Disraeli was, as he was at a later period, willing to stand out of the way, higher powers objected, and it fell through. It is rather curious that Palmerston himself just about this time recorded his opinion that 'Derby has an off-hand and sarcastic way about him which is not the manner of a courtier,' and elsewhere a declaration that 'the Court does not like the present [Derbyite] Government' as not subservient enough. About the same time he dropped in one of his letters a sentence of still greater weight, and not affected, as these may have been, by his own experiences and feelings. He thinks Lord Derby would do better 'if he would recruit a little more debating power from among his own followers.' But the projects of fusion came, like all the rest, to nothing. One service, however, Palmerston was able to do and did—that of getting Protection decently buried without a direct slight to the higher Tories by parrying an out-and-out Free-trade motion of Mr. Villiers's.

After the beating on the Budget, Lord Derby at once resigned, having, indeed, beforehand publicly pledged himself to do so; and after some difficulties of arrangement, a Coalition Government, with the Peelites heavily represented in the Ministry, came in, Lord Aberdeen being Premier, and Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston both serving. It is to be observed as very important to the proper consideration of the state of affairs, that up to

the end of October—that is to say, long after the election—it was quite on the cards that Palmerston might have joined the Conservatives,[1] and excessively improbable that he and Lord John would ever consent to serve either under or with each other; while still later the split between the Whig and Radical sections was so great that it was still more improbable that they would support a Coalition Government. These things, which were not known to the public, were of course known more or less to Lord Derby and his colleagues, and must have added very much to their irresolution; for it cannot be too often repeated that the hard-and-fast rule of resignation after being beaten on any important Government question was by no means then established. Indeed I do not know that even much later a Minister with a certain following of six-thirteenths of the House of Commons would have felt himself bound to resign because the seven-thirteenths might combine against him. It will be observed that, as a matter of fact, the majority which turned out Lord Derby was not a full majority of the House by a good deal. However, he resigned, and though the jokes and jeers about incapacity and

[1] It is fair, and indeed necessary, to say that Lord Palmerston, in the private letters published by Mr. Ashley, declares that he had 'no inclination or intention' to join Lord Derby, even if Protection was dropped, adding as one of his reasons that he 'does not think highly of Lord Derby as a statesman.' But this, of course, was a private expression. To Lord Derby himself he seems to have declined on the Protectionist score, though (and this is very important in reference to the charge of vacillation, if not of double dealing) Lord Derby told him distinctly that he did not consider himself bound to restore Protection, unless the country decided in its favour. The same documents contain a shrewd estimate by Lord Palmerston of the idiosyncrasy of the Peelite party with which he was himself soon to have to work; they might, he thought, be induced to join Lord Derby after all, by a 'liberal offer of places.'

incapables still continued, it was the general opinion of those who knew, that the actual business of government had been carried on very well. The navy had been considerably strengthened, the finances were in good order, the initial difficulties of the embroglio which was soon to bring about the Crimean War had been well handled by Lord Malmesbury. As for Reform, the best testimony on that head was that Lord John Russell had to meet the House next spring with the declaration that it was dropped.

I can, however, quite understand the *advocatus Diaboli* retorting 'Yes ; it is not impossible that the administrative incapacity of Lord Derby's Government was exaggerated, and it may be the case that, as far as divisions and so forth were concerned, he was justified in not resigning till he actually did. But this is not what we blame him for : we blame him for first taking the leadership of the Protectionist party—a party which had, if he had not personally, indulged in the most violent abuse of Sir Robert Peel for deserting Protection—and then deserting it himself. And we blame him still more for playing fast and loose so long on the matter.' As for this, it is possible no doubt to plead in return that Lord Derby had distinctly enough made his support of Protection conditional ; that, if the country would have Free-trade, he could not force Protection on it, and that the abuse of Sir Robert Peel was based on the fact that, with his party decidedly in favour of Protection, and the country, to say the least, not decidedly against it, he had suddenly changed his views. But I should be disposed to admit that these are rather excuses than defences. The real defence is that, if Lord Derby sinned, he only sinned in company with almost everybody else. How many Ministers during this century have refused or given up

office rather than change their opinions on points of personal and party consistency? Lord Derby himself did so twice, in 1834 and 1845, and these two actions are perhaps his chief title to political honour. So did Lord Cranborne, Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel in 1867. So did (in refusing, not resigning) the Liberal-Unionist chiefs in 1886. So did, it may be, one or two others at different times. But, on the whole, the history of both parties is a history of tergiversation, sometimes more, sometimes less excusable. The official Tories on Catholic Emancipation, on Free-trade, on Reform; the official Whigs or Liberals to no small extent on Reform and on Free-trade both, not to mention a more recent occasion which need not be specified, have all sinned considerably more than Lord Derby did in 1852. He had not even in 1845 itself given himself out as a Protectionist *quand même*. It was perfectly well known to all politicians that no small section of his party, though they disapproved of many of Sir Robert Peel's changes, were far from prepared to return to the so-called 'dear loaf'; and he had himself openly declared that he should take and stand by the sense of the country on the subject.

I think, indeed, that he would have done better to take a more decided line, and either nail his colours to the Protectionist mast when he took office, or dissolve at once with the distinct understanding that he would resign if a Protectionist majority were not returned, after which he would have been free to regard the matter as settled and done with. But by so doing he would have gone directly in the teeth of maxims (they can hardly be called principles) which were and are still in full force among the majority of politicians. My own belief is that the best way for a statesman is always to fight to the very last, if only for the

simple reason that it does not, as in the case of actual warfare, preclude the possibility of fighting another day in another field. But to the majority of English politicians this seems a dreadful thing, and no one who has had much to do with politics can be ignorant of the way in which such politicians will implore disciples of 'Thorough' to be careful, will solemnly warn them that 'Thorough' views are hopeless, are calculated to do much harm to the party, and so forth. In other words, and to sum up, I think that Lord Derby behaved on this occasion, not with dæmonic virtue certainly, but also with no very terrible want of ordinary human virtue. Indeed, if one of the stories is true—to wit, that, had he consented to truckle a little to the Irish brigade, the Budget, and with it the Ministry, would have been safe, his virtue may be said to have been above, not below, the ordinary level.

The truth of the whole matter seems to be that his own lack of a settled theory of general politics, which has been and will be so often commented on, coincided with Mr. Disraeli's indifference to political particulars. The leader of the Lower House did not care in the very least about Free-trade, and perhaps had no extraordinary affection for the country interest, looking rather to the creation (in which he to a great extent succeeded) of a Tory party in the towns. This combination could not but cause a good deal of what is called in modern political slang 'wobbling.' But to talk, as some Peelites then and since have talked, of 'humiliation' with reference to the attacks on Peel is childish. In the first place, it does not follow that because, or if, it was possible to retain Protection in 1846, it was possible to return to it six years later, when the whole social and commercial state of England had been adjusting itself

steadily to the difference. In the second, even putting this aside, the situations were totally different. In the first case the army woke up one morning and found its general and almost his whole staff in the enemy's camp. In the second, the general and his staff simply said, 'We find it is impossible to fight on this field, and we must retreat on a better.' And as the situation was different, so was the result. Peel broke up and destroyed his party. The Protectionists of 1852 shed some natural tears, and perhaps indulged in some natural strong language, but stuck steadily by their chief.

During Lord Derby's time of office the Duke of Wellington died, and this led to a considerable increase in the Prime Minister's honours. The Duke's death vacated, among other things, the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford. There was no possible candidate whose general claims were of half the strength of Lord Derby's, or who could have had a chance against him, man to man. His ability and distinction were beyond question. He had been absolutely unswerving in defence of the temporalities and political rights of the Church, and his churchmanship, though not of the new High Church type, was eminently of the old orthodox Anglican stamp, than which perhaps we have seen no better. Moreover, he had shown leanings to the High Church side itself in the matter of reviving the business powers of Convocation. But he was not popular with the extremer High Church party, perhaps mainly for the reason that many, if not most, of them were Peelites. They had a strong desire to adopt the Duke of Newcastle as their candidate ; but the more cool-headed among them, with Bishop Wilberforce at their head, saw that, if they did this, they would either throw Lord Derby into

the arms of the Low Church party, or else would encourage the Low Churchmen to set up an extreme candidate of their own who, in a three-cornered contest, might not improbably slip in. Accordingly the Duke was not brought forward, and Lord Derby came in. He was not formally installed till the Commemoration of next year, when he distinguished himself by very excellent harangues both in Latin and English. The brush with the Bishop of Oxford on the Canada Reserve Bill (see Conclusion) had occurred meanwhile, and with other things—such as a keenly-fought election in which Mr. Gladstone, after taking office, was only able to retain his seat by a very small majority—had created a considerable ferment of political sentiment in the University, which showed itself in the usual way by squibs and otherwise. But Lord Derby, who, for all his personal flings, never forgot taste and the fitness of things, steered absolutely clear of politics, and all went well. In speeches of this kind, it is, of course always difficult to tell how much is a man's own and how much the result of adroit coaching by expert supporters. But Lord Derby was not a man at any time very amenable to coaching, and I should imagine that one shrewd back-stroke, the effect of which was not, I think, noticed at the time, was very much his own. In commending, as in duty bound, the institution of the then new Schools of History, Science, and what not, he recommended the further addition of one in Theology, which was not actually added till long afterwards—indeed, if I remember rightly, not till he had ended his Chancellorship and his life. But in recommending it he used the argument that no study was likely to be actively pursued unless it led directly to the honours and the rewards of the University. It is almost needless to say that this is true,

and that it is at once the great argument for and the great argument against the multiplication of schools and triposes. Nothing but what is included in them has a chance of being seriously studied, and yet, the wider the range, the more difficult is it to maintain anything like a high and uniform standard in the various subjects. But to consider this further would lead us too far from Lord Derby : it has been chiefly introduced to show that his Chancellorship was no mere decorative office, and that he understood what it meant. Indeed, the range of his intellectual, if not of what may be called his sympathetic, interests was extraordinarily wide. He may not, in the common phrase, have cared much for many things, and in particular he had been, as he said himself, 'born in the præ-scientific period'; but his intelligence was so framed as to grasp the most diverse subjects with no common grip.

CHAPTER VI

IN OPPOSITION AGAIN

Great strength of the Conservative Opposition—The Crimean War—Lord Derby's refusal to take office in 1855 discussed in detail—Discontent of Mr. Disraeli and of the Party—Lord Derby's autocracy—Minor proceedings in Parliament—Lord Derby writes to Lord Malmesbury on the general political situation—Dissolution and weakening of the Conservatives—Fall of the Palmerston Government, and second acceptance of office by Lord Derby.

THE 'cold shade of opposition' into which Lord Derby and his party now retired was not so very cold. In the Commons they were some three hundred strong, united, with at their head a leader whom, if they did not wholly or exactly trust, they as well as others were beginning to recognise as the cleverest politician of the time. If their period of office had been short, it had at least enabled them to 'feel their feet,' to shake off the reproach of utter official inexperience, and, above all, to emerge from the sense of hopeless and resourceless exasperation in which they had passed the five previous years since Peel's desertion of them. In the Lords they were very strong, and no man on the other side could excel, while few were a match for, Lord Derby. To these positive and intrinsic advantages were added others, scarcely less in value, arising from the composition of the other side. The Aberdeen Government was a brilliant one in point of individual ability and political experience; but, in

the first place, even if the Peelite-Whig-Radical Coalition (the Radical members of which had little more than virtual representation in the Ministry) held together, it might at any moment be defeated by the Irish brigade and the Conservatives—a possible, if not a probable, combination. More really dangerous than even this was the composition of the Cabinet itself. Lord Aberdeen, despite his merits, had not much personal influence, and the individualities of Lord John, of Palmerston, and, by this time, of Mr. Gladstone, were too strong to work well together. Besides, there were obvious seeds of trouble in the fact that, of the three parties which composed the party and the Ministry, the weakest in numbers was the strongest in the Cabinet, while the most numerous was hardly represented in the Cabinet at all. Consequently the proceedings in the House of Commons for the Session of 1853 were excessively peculiar and mixed; indeed, nothing like them would now be possible. Sometimes the Tories saved the Government from its own Radical supporters. Sometimes they joined the Radicals in defeating the Government, which took these beatings as meekly as the assistance. Sometimes they fought the Coalition directly, and did not often get much the worst of it.

These tactics were naturally resented by partisans, such as Greville, on the other side, as 'a policy of mischief and confusion,' 'vengeance against the Coalition,' and so forth. This, of course, is nonsense, and would have been equally nonsense if the cases had been reversed, and a Tory had said it. The Maynooth Grant squabbles, the details of Army and Militia Bills, and so forth, were matters of little or no importance to the country. They were, therefore, fair ground for continuing the task of 'breathing' and exercising the party, and of exhibiting the inconveniences of the Coalition

to the nation. The worst thing that happened to the party during the session was a Committee of enquiry into the management of the Admiralty under the Derby Government. Even in this it was shown that the faults were those of subordinates, and that while no Minister but the Duke of Northumberland was to blame at all, he was only to blame for having left things too much to others. In the summer, however, matters of far more importance began to come to a head, the matters which resulted in the Crimean War. The librariesful of discussion on this subject may be said to have helped us to at least one clear conclusion—that the war was almost wholly due to the weakness and the short-sightedness of the Aberdeen Government, especially of the Prime Minister. This matter, however, belongs to other lives as a principal thing, and only concerns us here as it affected Lord Derby and his party. It was impossible that they should not make the conduct of affairs the subject of criticism, all the more so that it was known to experienced politicians then, and is generally admitted now, that the war was almost certainly caused by the fall of Lord Derby's Government. If Lord Aberdeen was not really hampered by an old agreement of his and Peel's in Louis Philippe's time, made (when the circumstances were quite different) with Russia, the Czar thought he was, and presumed on it, while Lord Aberdeen's dislike of France, and that entertained by the Peelites generally, were notorious. Lord John had not improved matters during his brief tenure of the Foreign Office. Palmerston, the only man in the Cabinet capable of managing it, was kept studiously out of all influence on foreign affairs, and his advice neither asked nor taken, so much so that at last, in December, 1853, he actually resigned, but returned when the fleet was sent to the Black Sea. By

this time the famous and fatal 'drift' had all but accomplished its course, and the Sinope disaster had happened. His resignation, however, was nominally on Reform.

At the beginning of 1854 critical discussion of the conduct of foreign affairs became unavoidable. This business is always an ungracious one, and one in which it is exceedingly difficult for an Opposition not to deserve, and quite impossible for it not to incur, the charge of want of patriotism. It may have been partly the luck of the Opposition on this occasion that they did not incur it much; but it was certainly their merit that they did not deserve it at all. In no such matter has criticism of conduct been so adroitly divorced from attempts to frustrate the war itself. In the terrible winter of 1854–55 things came, as everyone knows, to a crisis, and Parliament had no sooner met than Mr. Roebuck's motion for enquiry into the management of the war was carried by a majority of 157 in a House of 453 —one of the most crushing defeats on record against any Government.

And now came the most debatable event in all Lord Derby's life. It is also one of the most complicated, and though considerable light has been thrown on it by the publication of Greville's and Lord Malmesbury's 'Diaries,' much still remains dark. Lord Malmesbury's account of the beginning and end of the affair is at once very simple and not a little dramatic. On February 1, Lord Derby sent for him, told him that the Queen had empowered himself to form a Government, and that Her Majesty had herself suggested that Malmesbury should go back to the Foreign Office. At this time Lord Derby appeared 'in high spirits and confident of success.' Lord Malmesbury told him that in that case he should like to go to Heron Court to see to

business, and received full leave, his chief bidding him 'make haste back, for he would find everything settled.' He went home accordingly, and at five o'clock in the morning of the 2nd, Mr. George Cavendish Bentinck, his friend and neighbour, knocked him up with a commission from Mr. Disraeli, to tell him that all *was* settled in the wrong way; that Lord Derby had failed owing to Lord Palmerston having thrown him over; that he had at once told the Queen that he could not form a Government under present circumstances, but would try again if Her Majesty were unable to procure one. Lord John Russell was appealed to and failed, and Lord Palmerston himself came in as Prime Minister, with practically the old Aberdeen Government, *minus* Lord Aberdeen and Lord John. A day or two later Lord Derby made one of his usual candid explanations in the House of Lords, an explanation which for the time deeply offended both the party generally and Mr. Disraeli in particular; for it amounted, in fact, to saying that they had tried and failed in 1852, and he did not care to try them again.

Many scraps of information as to what had happened meanwhile can be pieced together from the same and other sources. It is not yet quite certain what finally determined Lord Palmerston, who seems to have at one time thought of coming in. He would have been humoured by allowing him to bring, not merely Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert, but Lord Clarendon, for whom Lord Malmesbury was quite ready to make way, as was Mr. Disraeli for Lord Palmerston himself. It is said that there was some hocus-pocus in Palmerston's manner of dealing with the two Peelites, he giving them to understand that he did not want to join, and Lord Derby to understand that he

would join if he might bring them with him. Palmerston's own biographers give no very ample information on the subject, the chief item being a letter in which, while declining to join as not being likely to do much good, he promises support out of office. The earlier expressions cited in the last chapter in reference to 1852 illuminate this a little, and Palmerston's own conduct is not at all difficult to understand. Although he and Lord Derby were very good and old friends personally, they were rather too like each other in many ways to have got on well together in the same Cabinet, especially when the younger and less officially experienced man was at the head. And a man, not merely of very much less personal ambition and self-will, but of infinitely less political shrewdness, than Palmerston must have seen that the ball was much more likely to come to his own feet if he left Lord Derby to play without help from him. On the other hand, it is said also, and may well be believed, that in not a small number of Lord Derby's own following, the *insanabile vulnus* of 1846 rankled to such a degree that they threatened secession if he coalesced with the Peelites—a piece of very excusable insubordination, though one which he of all men was least likely to excuse. It is also certain that his health had been much shaken by the severe attacks of gout from which, even at a period anterior to this, he was scarcely ever free.

And, lastly, it is said that higher influences were to some extent at work. We have seen what Palmerston thought of these influences as bearing on Lord Derby. Greville, who, to do him justice, little as he liked the Conservatives, was shocked at his Whig friends for refusing to combine with them at this crisis, had, in his random and ill-tempered way, just before asserted that Her Majesty 'cor-

dially detested Derby and his crew.' Others have set the failure down to a similar detestation of Lord Derby personally on the part of the Prince Consort, while it is not denied that Lord Aberdeen was a person exceptionally grateful to the Court. But this is pretty certainly most of it gossip. We have the best evidence that Her Majesty, who has not generally been accused of being a hypocrite, was thoroughly cordial to Lord Derby, and gave him the fullest powers. It seems, indeed, that in the Schleswig-Holstein matter he had taken the Danish side more than was agreeable to her, and that between him and the Prince Consort there may have been no great sympathy is likely enough. We know that the Prince could not understand, and did not like, English noblemen of Lord Derby's type, and I think it possible that Lord Derby, in his good-tempered English way, did not think much of the Prince. But, considering the known facts, it would be excessively unfair to put any blame in this quarter, where, indeed, a moment's thought will show that it could not really rest. Secret influences might have prevented Lord Derby's summons, or frustrated his hopes of Coalition ; but when the offer of forming a Government had once been made to him, what could they have done to him if he had simply accepted, and made his own Government out of his own party? Why did he not, as Lord Ellenborough, after saying that he himself would 'carry a musket for him,' bade him, 'Mind one thing: when you go to the Queen, don't leave the room without kissing hands'? His own explanation has been partly given, while it seems, and his provisional suggestion to Her Majesty bears it out, that he really thought attempts to patch up the Whig-Peelite Coalition would fail, and he would come back as *homme nécessaire*.

When all was over he held a meeting of the party, and, with the courage which never deserted him on such occasions, though at such other pinches as had just occurred it was too much wont to fail, boldly declared that he would not be dictated to, but that he would give office to whomsoever he liked. He was at least necessary to them, and they were an audience not likely to be affronted by straightforward pluck. So they went away, says Lord Malmesbury, perhaps too sanguinely, 'entirely satisfied.'

If so, they were satisfied pretty easily. No statesman, I confess, seems to me to have ever made a greater *rifiuto* than Lord Derby on this occasion, though I do not think it was *per viltate*. On the face of it, there never, short of an absolute majority, was a better chance for party success or a greater opening for making history. The Whig-Peelite Coalition was utterly discredited in two ways. Ministry of All the Talents as it claimed to be, and in a manner may be fairly admitted to have been, it had not only drifted into war, it had not only shown itself scandalously incompetent to conduct that war, but it had given the further spectacle of a house hopelessly divided against itself. All the Peelite prestige which had told so heavily against Lord Derby in 1852 had gone. The Peelites had been (and, by the way, were soon again proved to be, though this, of course, it is not fair to urge against Lord Derby) slippery colleagues, anything but competent administrators, and, except Mr. Gladstone, not very great debaters. Parliament, the press, the country, were united in condemning their conduct of affairs. But at the same time Parliament, the press, and the country were (with the exception of the Manchester School, who were not formidable) united in wishing the war to be vigorously prosecuted. Nothing else was thought of for the

moment, the talk about Reform being, as was soon shown to demonstration, mere unreal party battledore and shuttlecock which could be played or not played for years. In undertaking to fight out and settle the quarrel with Russia, Lord Derby and his colleagues would have had the immense advantage of coming to the help of the country at a critical time, and of being able, with no unfairness, to charge any mishaps, and even some mistakes of their own, on the undoubted misconduct of their predecessors. Even as it was, they were strong enough to make a fight. And a dissolution on any factious opposition to them by men responsible for the blundering into war, and the worse blundering in it, would have almost to a certainty given them a working majority. I agree with Mr. Kebbel that this was the great mistake of Lord Derby's life.

It is not, however, very difficult to see what made him commit it. Some of the causes have been hinted at, but are worth recapitulating. Others may be added. He was a very proud man, and I have no doubt that he had felt the humiliation of holding office on sufferance on the former occasion severely. He had become, as we have seen already, somewhat of an indolent one, and had no fancy for the extra labour involved in such work as he would have had to undertake if he had come in. Interested as he was in politics, his interest was, as has also been pointed out, scarcely of the thoroughgoing character which would have been needed to carry him through. But I am disposed to believe that, on the whole, he spoke the truth when he asserted or implied, in his explanation to the House of Lords, that he did not consider his own party strong enough, in other ways besides numbers, for the task. It may be very frankly admitted that to take office without a majority, and

with the prospect of winding up such a clew as that of the Crimean War, would have been no child's play. In his earlier days the Mr. Stanley who turned from the Irish to the Colonial Office, and in each accomplished a gigantic work against desperate opposition—the man of whom Lord Grey wrote to Princess Lieven in July, 1832, 'Stanley never fails'—would certainly not have flinched from even this task. But this youthful energy had long been lost. And there is no doubt that Lord Derby never acquired full confidence in the 'young team' which he had himself to drive, however good-naturedly he may have spoken of it. Even with Mr. Disraeli he was never on cordial terms, the differences between the two men being too radical for that; and Lord Derby, who kept his shrewdness to the last, must have known better than anyone else that Mr. Disraeli's great genius did not lie in the administrative direction. With Lord Malmesbury he was on terms of much intimacy, and he knew, doubtless, that the popular Radical and Peelite cry against that Minister was unjust; but he can hardly have thought him a heaven-born statesman. He had been condemned in his first administration (over-blamed, as I hold it to have been) to a good deal of respectable mediocrity which it was difficult to get rid of without offending it, and even if he had made up his mind to do so, he knew far too little of the rank and file of his party to select promising successors. As we have seen, Lord Palmerston put his finger on the blot of 'not recruiting.' This peculiarity was a standing subject of grief to his colleagues, and there is extant a half-comical, half-pathetic, but wholly interesting letter of Mr. Disraeli's to Lord Malmesbury, in which he elaborates a scheme by which Lord Derby was to give nine dinners of thirty men each, and so to obtain at least a feed-

ing acquaintance with the party. Hail-fellow-well-met as he was with his intimates, and in certain circumstances with the general, Lord Derby was excessively shy of enlarging the circle of the first, and kept the second at a really greater distance than some men of far more stand-off manners have done. From all which things came woe. We do not know yet—apparently it is to be a long time before we shall know—what Mr. Disraeli thought of it. He probably ate his heart a good deal during all the twenty years from 1847 to 1867, as we know that he did on this 1855 occasion. But the process must have generally gone on, as with wise and brave men it does, in silence.

For the present, however, as we have seen, matters were patched up with no great difficulty between Lord Derby and his followers, thanks to the 'absolute shall' of a man who knows that he is necessary to his party, and that they are not particularly necessary to him. How the settlement took place between Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli we do not know; probably—for they were both wise men—by that simple process of 'sweeping up the glasses and saying nothing about it' which Sir Barnes Newcome, also a wise man after his generation, recommended. As for Lord Derby, he had something like his revenge pretty soon. The Peelites who had certainly refused to join him, and who, according to some accounts, had been half-jockeyed into doing so by Palmerston, did not hold office a month, Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert all resigning—nominally, at least, because Palmerston accepted the Roebuck Committee, which he had been obliged to do by the firmness of the Conservatives. A couple of months later Lord Derby rather scandalised that not very starched politician, the master of Heron Court, by saying 'What pro-

positions?' when his friend made a remark to him about the rejection of 'our propositions' at the Vienna Conference. He had just come back from the Two Thousand week, and had not bothered himself about politics. At least he pretended he had not, for I fancy there was some fanfaronnade in these little flings of his. Nor was Lord Malmesbury quite happy when shortly afterwards a field-day against the Government was settled. He had not forgotten the February refusal, perhaps not wholly the intention to make him a Jonah for Lord Clarendon's benefit. The Address, however, was moved for, but refused by a great majority, which must have pleased Lord Malmesbury. His theory that Lord Derby, having refused to do the work himself, ought not to criticise others, has generosity and a certain apparent soundness. But it might be plausibly argued on the other side that a man who, from his own point of view, had done his duty by staying out, certainly had not forfeited the right or abdicated the function of seeing that others did their duty while they were in; and that both administration and diplomacy still blundered horribly I do not think anyone can deny. Ministers, however, were equally successful in the Commons; but the Opposition was not in the least discouraged, and Lord John Russell's unfortunate mismanagement at Vienna gave another opportunity. Soon Lord John's resignation spoilt this attack, which was to have been headed by the first Lord (then Sir Edward) Lytton; and yet another motion of Mr. Roebuck's had even worse luck. The fact, no doubt, was that many Conservatives sympathised with Lord Malmesbury's very honourable reluctance to embarrass the Government. It may have been a little schoolboyish, but the rules of schoolboy honour are not the worst things in the world. At any rate, it seems

to have been felt that there was no more to be done. Late in the autumn Mr. Disraeli wrote in rather a despairing way (for him) to Lord Malmesbury bewailing 'the fatal refusal to take the reins last February, which lost us the respect of all classes,' and observing 'we are off the rails, and shall remain so as long as the war lasts.'

In November 1855 an event of some domestic interest to Lord Derby happened. His son, Lord Stanley, the present Earl, was known to entertain opinions more Liberal than his father's or those of the party to which both belonged; and Lord Palmerston, on the death of Sir William Molesworth, offered the Colonies to him. According to Greville, he returned to Knowsley, which he had just left, and where he found his father at the billiard-table. He was greeted characteristically with the question, 'What on earth brings *you* back? Are you going to be married?' It would appear, however, that on explanation the particular banns were forbidden, or at least advice given not to put them up. Lord Stanley had already developed his characteristic and lifelong objection to war, and this would of itself have made his joining Palmerston's Government awkward, if nothing else.

1856 brought with it at its very opening a question which was of the extremest interest to Lord Derby, that of life-peerages. As is well known, the question arose almost accidentally, though there was a suspicion (unfounded, it would seem) at the time, that it was the thin end of the wedge. The objections to it prevailed, and the present limited use of life-peerages is conceived in quite a different spirit, being strictly and definitely official, and rather analogous to the spiritual than to the temporal lordships. The objections to the original scheme, if scheme it can be

called, were many. The Law Peers were, as might have been expected, particularly fierce against it ; but the general objections took, for the most part, two different forms—the first being that it was, if not an illegal, an unconstitutional exercise of prerogative ; and the second, that it was distinctly impolitic. On the first head, no doubt, much might be said on both sides. On the second, the arguments against it, and not only from the Tory side, appear to me overwhelming. It might seem—we know that on two occasions it has seemed—convenient to Ministers, not of one party only, to swamp or threaten to swamp the Peers ; but nobody could think this a desirable proceeding, and the institution of life-peerages at discretion would evidently be a temptation to abuse it. Even short of this the principle could commend itself neither to thoughtful Radicals nor to thoughtful Tories. If the hereditary principle in a Second Chamber is ignored, then nomination becomes more unreasonable and offensive to both parties than simple election, while even election for life is a principle practically opposed to Liberal doctrine. The House of Lords may be the invaluable ballast which its admirers, or the useless cumbrous deckload that its denouncers, assert it to be ; but its usefulness could hardly be improved, and its strength, its independence, and its sense of responsibility must be impaired, by life-peerages of the miscellaneous kind. Lord Derby took very high ground in opposing Lord Wensleydale's patent (the nominal leader of the resistance was Lyndhurst), and he made one at least of his finest speeches on the subject. As is well known, the proceeding was condemned in the Lords by a decisive majority, and Parke not being allowed to take his seat, he was created Lord Wensleydale in the ordinary way, and the scheme was

dropped, to be revived long afterwards in a form which deprived it of almost all its mischief.

Lord Derby also took a decided line in the debates about Kars, the most important incident of which was Mr. Whiteside's famous display in the Lower House—one of the finest and longest speeches, not bolstered out with blue-books, ever delivered in that Debating Society. In the Lords (the Whiteside motion having been utterly defeated in the Commons) the discussion covered the whole field of the peace, which Lord Derby neatly called the Capitulation of Paris. This was the kind of thing which his old friend and colleague, Sir James Graham, called making the House of Lords 'one of the scenes and instruments of his amusement, indifferent to the consequences and the mischief he may do, provided that it supplies him with occupation and excitement.' The criticism is severe, but the justification of it was rather faint, and it certainly came ill from a person who, though the testimony to his great gifts is almost unanimous, has on the whole the most chequered, and certainly the most barren, record of any politician of his time.

It is certain, however, that the discontent in the Conservative party at this moment was very great. Even Mr. Disraeli, who was usually not only as tough but as buoyant as india-rubber, had not got over the 'refusal to take office in the spring,' and the general feeling was not more cheerful. There were still, as indeed there were for years to come, rumours of Mr. Gladstone being invited to take the leadership, though many stout Tories swore that they would at once break off all connection with the party if he took it. And though in numbers it has several times been weaker, it probably never was at a lower ebb in spirit. Towards the end of the year, Lord Malmesbury, who had himself, though

by no means given to despond, been very low, addressed a regular remonstrance to his chief, the text of which we have not. But the answer is so characteristic and of so much importance, that I must make an exception to the rule of not giving quotations, necessitated by the limits of this book, and insert it (*Memoirs of an ex-Minister.* London: Longmans & Co., ii. 53, 54):

From Lord Derby to Lord M. (on the Causes of the Disorganisation of the Conservative Party, &c.)

Knowsley: December 15, 1856.

My dear Malmesbury,—I return you Jolliffe's letters, enclosed in your desponding one of the 7th. I ought to have done so earlier, but I have had Lichfield with me all the week, alone; and we have been so busy shooting, that I have had no time to give to politics. Yesterday I was threatened with a fit of gout, but it has, I hope, quite passed off; and I expect to go to Hatfield to-morrow, and look forward to being with you on Friday afternoon. I shall be very glad to meet[1] Jolliffe there, and to talk over quietly with him and you the position and prospects of the Conservative party. That it is in a certain state of disorganisation is not to be denied, nor, I think, to be wondered at; indeed, I am disposed to be rather surprised to find how mere fidelity to party ties, and some personal feeling, has for so long a time kept together so large a body of men, under most adverse circumstances, and in the absence of any cry or leading question, to serve as a broad line of demarcation between the two sides of the House. The breach which was made in the Conservative body by Peel, in 1845-6, and which might have been healed to a great degree if his followers had only given us a fair support, or even stood neutral in the session of 1852-3, was widened by the formation of the Coalition Government, on the avowed principle (or no principle) of discarding all previous party ties. Public attention has since that time been mainly fixed upon the war; and since Palmerston

[1] Whip of the Conservative party, afterwards created Lord Hylton.

came into office he has adroitly played his cards, so as to avoid, with one or two exceptions, making any attacks upon our institutions, or affording much ground for censure from a Conservative Opposition. In short, he has been a Conservative Minister working with Radical tools, and keeping up a show of Liberalism in his foreign policy, which nine in ten of the House of Commons care nothing about. That a Conservative party should have held together at all under such circumstances is rather to be wondered at, than that there should be apathy and indifference when there is nothing to be fought for by the bulk of the party. As to Disraeli's unpopularity, I see it and regret it; and especially regret that he does not see more of the party in private; but they could not do without him, even if there were anyone ready and able to take his place. For myself, I *never* was *ambitious* of office, and am not likely to become more so as I grow older; but I am now, as I have been, ready to accept the responsibility of it if I see a chance not only of taking but of keeping it. Of that I see no chance with the present House of Commons, unless the Government commit some very gross blunder, and make their continuance impossible. But I agree with you that, if there is to be for many years a chance of power for a Conservative Ministry, it must be secured by active exertions at the general election, which must shortly take place.

Yours very sincerely,
DERBY.

This is one of the most serious letters on general politics that we have from Lord Derby, and despite the inevitable *feu de joie* at the beginning about 'so busy shooting that I have had no time to give to politics,' it is earnest enough. Lord Derby's humour was so all-pervading and incorrigible, that I should imagine the touch about Disraeli's 'seeing more of the party in private' to be a *riposte* for the notable scheme of the 9 × 30 dinners, of which he is very likely to have heard, even if it was not formally proposed to him.

But elsewhere the tone is quite serious, nor do I at least find fault with the little kicks-up of the heels that vary it. We may observe, however, in the letter the results of one pet idea of Lord Derby's and the germ of another, both of which exercised a strong and perhaps not an altogether wholesome influence on the fortunes of his party, and so on the national history. The first is the notion that things would have been all right if Peel's followers had only given him a fair support. Evidently Lord Derby did not even yet see, though he learnt it afterwards, that the Peelites could not have come back to the party they had deserted except in white sheets, if not in *san benitos* with devils reversed (both of which are very awkward political uniforms), and that even then the strength and backbone of the Tory party would have none of them. Secondly, he had evidently begun to entertain that notion of Palmerston as half buffer and half stopgap, which, after his own second attempt failed in 1859, he carried out to the extent of a regular compact, with results to be discussed hereafter. But it is certainly extraordinary that so acute a reasoner and so quick an understander should not have seen that every word he says, especially all that about 'nothing to be fought for,' no 'attacks on our institutions,' and so on, implies the heaviest censure on his own refusal to take office two years before. I think he did see it: and that the antepenultimate passage foresees the possibility of the retort being made, and attempts a rejoinder to it.

The protest, however, seems not to have been without effect, though Lord Derby, in accordance with his invariable practice, in holding a party meeting soon after the beginning of the Session of 1857 took the offensive in the Coriolanian tone which sat very well on him. He had earlier in the

year still, and even later, repeated his attempts to make the Peelites join him, to the increasing disgust of his followers. The Duke of Beaufort told Lord Malmesbury point blank, at Longleat, that if the Peelites came in he would leave the party; and on the Budget some Tories refused to vote because of the rumour that Lord Derby had coalesced with Mr. Gladstone. He denied this, but declared that, if any Conservative attempted to dictate the course he should pursue with regard to any political personage whatever, he should regard it as an insult, and no longer recognise that member as belonging to the party. This is 'Curs, I banish you,' with a vengeance, and quite in the grand manner. It was rewarded by long-continued cheering and great enthusiasm ; but the soreness of feeling remained. An attempt to secure Mr. Sidney Herbert was rebuffed; but Mr. Gladstone appeared to be much more amenable, and indeed, it is well known that years later there was still a chance of his joining. Nor does the quasi-breach between Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli seem to have been healed. An attack by Disraeli on Palmerston in reference to a secret treaty between France and Austria had had some effect, but not so much as was expected, and Mr. Disraeli, in return, threw cold water on the China question, which Lord Derby had resolved to take up. It was taken up, however, and, as is known, the Palmerston Government were defeated by the joint votes of the Tories, the Peelites, and the Cobdenite Radicals. Lord Palmerston went to the country, as Lord Derby desired he should, but the event was not favourable to the Conservatives. The coquettings with the Peelites had done Lord Derby no good with the country party proper ; the China question was not thought to be a proper one for the Tories to take up in a sense adverse to the

Government. It is not even certain that the accentuation of Lord Derby's Church views, which had drawn him nearer to Mr. Gladstone, and which led him to denounce, in a very good speech just before the dissolution, the one-sided evangelicalism of Lord Palmerston's Church appointments, did him any good at the election. For the unpopularity of Puseyism was still very great, and the excitement of the Papal Aggression had even yet not completely died down. Indeed, I cannot help regarding it as one of the chief pieces of ill-luck which has befallen the Tory party during the last half-century, that Lord Derby was converted to this view too early, and that Lord Beaconsfield held out against it too long. If the attitude of the heads of the party in 1857 and 1880 had been exactly reversed, it would have been a luckier thing at the polls. As it was, Lord Derby's refusal to take office, his Peelite tamperings, and some minor matters were punished by the loss of some thirty seats, so that the party was in a very bad way indeed, and had to take office next year in a really impossible minority.

Symptoms, too, of the old fatal want of 'Thorough' appeared, even after the lesson should have been learnt. Lord Derby was laid up by the gout when Parliament opened, but he sent directions to Lord Malmesbury to be very guarded on Reform, and not commit the party, but either hold his tongue or promise respectful and dispassionate consideration. He sent some more coachings to his lieutenant, who seems to have thought that Disraeli would have liked a different course; but Lord Malmesbury, though staunch to his chief's orders, could not refrain from growls. He laments shortly afterwards Lord Derby's indifference to the sudden growth and power of the political press, bewails the fact that he is 'too proud a man to flatter anybody,'

and is aghast at finding that 'nothing but the Jew Bill seemed to interest him.' It is certain that he took comparatively little part in the session, even after the Indian Mutiny became the talk of England and the world. The Bishop of Oxford, with whom he was now very good friends, tried to make him oppose the Divorce Bill, but without success. On September 9th, Lord Malmesbury describes him as 'in very low spirits, and quite without his usual *entrain*.'

If office had been likely to restore these spirits, he was soon to enjoy it. Among the many dramatic revolutions of English politics, scarcely one is more dramatic than the contrast of 1857 and 1858. Few Ministers have ever been more triumphantly rewarded for dissolving than Lord Palmerston had been. Not merely had the regular Opposition come back weakened, disgusted, and more really discredited than it had been since the formation of the Conservative party, but many of his chief opponents had failed to secure re-election. There was no longer such a thing as a Peelite group at all. But Nemesis was at hand. There was the Indian Mutiny, in reference to which Lord Derby, who had recovered his health, made a slashing attack on the Government when Parliament met, early in December 1857. Large numbers of the nominal Liberal majority were Radicals, who hated Lord Palmerston, and had the defeat of Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, and others of their chiefs to avenge. It was one of them—Mr. Milner Gibson—who availed himself of Lord Palmerston's action on an unforeseen event, a fresh attempt on the life of Napoleon III. Lord Palmerston's conduct in regard to this offended at once extreme Liberals and those Tories who were jealous of any apparent truckling to foreign Powers. The Gibson resolution

was carried by 234 to 213. Lord Palmerston resigned, and Lord Derby being sent for, made no more hesitation, but at once accepted office. If a picturesque story told with some reserves in Mr. Ashley's 'Life of Palmerston' is true, he had by his own action obtained the victory. It is asserted that the Tories in the Lower House had not at first taken a very decided line in reference to the matter, and had even approved of the bringing in of some sort of Bill to deal with the circumstances. But during the debate Lord Derby himself is said to have come down to his old haunts, and taken a seat under the gallery of the House of Commons. He had, as a member of that House, been famous for nothing so much as for his unequalled sense of the way in which a debate was going, and of the moment at which to strike. He saw now that there was a feeling against the Government in all parts of the House, and that the English back was thoroughly up, together with, perhaps, other feelings not so creditable. He scribbled a note to the occupants of the front Opposition bench, with the word, or rather its equivalent, to 'let everything go in.' They did so, Mr. Disraeli himself speaking vigorously, and the thing was done—that is, if it had been done when 'twas done.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND MINISTRY

Disadvantages under which Lord Derby took office—His neglect to strengthen himself—The Government begins well—Italian and Indian affairs—The Ionian Islands—Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby—The Derby of 1858—Reform Bill resolved on by Lord Derby himself—Examination of his action—The Bill ridiculed and defeated—Dissolution—Conservatives return in greater but insufficient numbers—Defeat on the Address, and Resignation.

If Nemesis came for Lord Palmerston on the occasion referred to at the end of the chapter, that ill-tempered goddess must have been more than usually *læta negotio*; for the same stroke hit Lord Derby, whatever he might think, much harder. He had refused office at the beginning of 1855, when he was supported by all but half of the House of Commons, when the Whig-Peelite Coalition was utterly discredited, when the Radicals were not to be reckoned with as a real force in the country, and when—greatest advantage of all—he had but to take up and carry on a war which was thoroughly approved by the vast majority of Englishmen, and in regard to which the mismanagement of his opponents had at once given him an excuse for any shortcomings of his own, and rendered their criticism practically harmless, if not impossible. He took it now with a much smaller following in both Houses, especially in that which has and had the prerogative vote, with the

Reform business imminent, with the great difficulty of the resettlement of India unaccomplished, with the problem of adjusting the quarrel with France unsolved, and with the practical certainty of a fresh disturbance in Italian politics, which must in turn disturb Continental relations still further. He had during the interval almost disgusted his own party, and had seriously discredited it, and himself, with other parties in the nation, by a complication of commissions and omissions. He had hankered after a Peelite alliance long after it was not only impossible, but valueless to him. He had compromised the reputation of his party by his attitude towards the China question far more than it had ever been compromised by the irresolution in regard to Protection. He was preparing to compromise it still more by the assumption of a coquetting attitude towards Reform. He had not exactly quarrelled, but had not kept up good relations, with his first lieutenant. And, perhaps worst of all, he had entirely neglected the duty most incumbent on a man who had almost openly complained of the weakness of his staff – the duty of looking out for promising recruits.

That he might have found such recruits even without looking beyond men who afterwards were distinguished in his own party is certain. The present Lord Salisbury was very young ; but he was older than Pitt was when he became a prominent politician, and than Canning was when parties competed for him. Sir Stafford Northcote was a man almost of middle age. Lord Carnarvon, like Lord Salisbury, was of age, and must have been already known as, if not one of the strongest of men, one of the most remarkable of young men of rank for character, industry, knowledge, and a certain kind of ability. There were others not much inferior to these whom Lord Derby

might have enlisted and whom he did not enlist. His Ministry, when formed, was almost identical with that of 1852, the chief accessions being the future Lord Mayo, who did not show his value till long after; Sir Hugh Cairns, who was certainly a tower of strength; and Lord Ellenborough, who, great as was his ability, rapidly got the Government into trouble in his usual fashion. Even now Lord Derby had not given up the Coalition idea. He again offered the Colonies to Mr. Gladstone, who had been in rather intimate relations with him for some time, and tried also to induce the Duke of Newcastle, a Peelite, who had been the chief blunderer in the Crimean business, and Lord Grey, a Conservative Whig, to serve. All refused, and the Conservative party launched out on its own bottom into the deep with considerably worse prospects than it would have had, not merely in 1855—the prospects then were positively good—but even in 1846. Even as it was there were difficulties in getting off the shore. The Colonies were finally entrusted to Lord Stanley, a most excellent man of business, but a half-hearted Tory. It is said that both Lord Grey and Mr. Gladstone would have joined but for Mr. Disraeli, and indeed it is difficult to conceive either getting on with him. But it is probable that by this time the Tory chief of the staff was sure enough of his position not to think it necessary to display that self-abnegation which he had formerly professed himself ready to exercise.

The quidnuncs had several coincidences to note about the new Government. A majority of 19 had turned out Lord Palmerston, and it had been a majority of the same number which turned out Lord Derby five years earlier. His summons to form a Ministry had again been on February 21. Whether in consequence of these mystic

signs, or for other reasons, the new Government began well enough. Lord Derby's opening statement was differently estimated in point of effectiveness, but is admitted to have been generally approved ; indeed, these things were something of a speciality with him. It is said to have been delivered with some hesitation and with much less confidence than was usual with the speaker, and it was, on the whole, of an apologetic and conciliatory character. He explained his attempts to obtain outside help, justified them on the ground that the party divisions in the House of Commons had changed from broad splits to imperceptible gradations, talked of progressive Reform and gradual improvement, and hinted at dealing with the franchise at a later period. The speech was full of sweet reasonableness, but a little wanting in magnanimity. However, everybody was prepared to be pleased for the moment. The odium which had been aroused against Lord Palmerston's Government by the somewhat inadequate cause of Lord Clanricarde's appointment was not assuaged ; and Palmerston himself, since his electoral success, had sinned a little by *outrecuidance*. His Government was thought a weak one. Mr. Bright, who was rather prejudiced perhaps, had described it in a famous letter a year before as one of fluent mediocrities, which was somewhat hard on Sir George Cornewall Lewis. Lord John Russell was still irreconcilable. The Whigs were afraid of the Radicals, the Radicals were afraid of being again put upon by the Whigs. Mr. Gladstone had not made up his mind to take the plunge and cut himself off from Toryism altogether. Sir James Graham was an extinct volcano. The other Peelites had shrunk to nothing, and were regarded by most Englishmen as 'whimsicals.'

Still, Lord Derby's was a Government on sufferance, and

in no country of the world have Governments on sufferance ever gone on long. Moreover, it had immense practical difficulties before it—difficulties which might have wrecked a Government as strong as Sir Robert Peel's of 1841, or Lord Beaconsfield's of 1874. It had, besides, against it a sort of general impression, which has disappeared now, but which I remember as being prevalent much later, indeed almost up to 1874 itself. Sir Francis Baring, Greville says, wrote to Lord John Russell that the 'existence of the present Ministry is contrary to Parliamentary government'; and I do not think he meant only that the existence of a Government in a minority was so. Since the Reform Bill it had become a sort of axiom with most politicians, with the greater portion of the press, and with many, if not most, Englishmen, that Tories somehow or other had no right to govern. Lord Dalling tells us that, after 1832, the more sanguine Whigs thought there never would be a Tory Government again, and an idea of this kind, as to what will not be, easily hardens into a conviction as to what ought not to be. The period of 1841–5 had a little shaken the serenity of this assurance; but the memory of those palmy days had been washed away by the cataclysm in which they ended, and on all other occasions, 1835, 1851–2, &c., Tory Ministries either had not been able to get under way at all, or had proved to be mere transient and embarrassed phantoms. Seventeen years is a short time in history, though a long time in life, and there must be many who remember the kind of horror—the expressions as in regard to a sort of revolution of natural laws—to which many excellent Liberals gave vent in 1874, as the telegrams brought more and more home to them the hideous conviction that Tories had come in, and come in to stay.

All these things—their own sins, their weakness, the

prejudices and selfishnesses of others—were heavily against the new Ministry, and probably most careful observers doubted whether they would stay in as long as they actually did. Yet they did not begin ill. The difficulty with France was wiped out completely, and creditably enough, before they had been many days in office. Lord Malmesbury was not less successful with another awkward *remanet*—the once famous Cagliari business—from the Palmerston administration. This business was, in plain language, to extort from the Neapolitan Government compensation for the imprisonment of two English engineers who had taken service on one of Cavour's filibustering expeditions. But there was no doubt that the Neapolitans, though morally justified, had been technically wrong. Nor did the acquittal of Dr. Bernard do the Ministry any harm, for indeed they had nothing to do with the matter. Nor, again, were they much damaged by an incident which seemed likely to wreck them almost at once, the action of Lord Ellenborough, following on the proclamation by which Lord Canning, the Governor-General, made a sweeping confiscation of the whole lands of Oude. Lord Ellenborough, one of the ablest and most generous, but also one of the most eccentric and untrustworthy, of politicians, promptly rated Lord Canning in a strange despatch, which, partly by his own doing, got abroad, though it ought to have been kept secret. The Opposition, who were ready to have attacked Canning, shifted their attack to Ellenborough, and prepared for a field day in both Houses. Lord Ellenborough, however, at once resigned, and this took the whole heart out of the attack. It was beaten in the Lords by a majority of 9, and after certain preliminaries which formed the occasion of one of Mr. Disraeli's most famous and amusing speeches at Slough,

collapsed entirely in the Commons, the resolutions being withdrawn. Lord Malmesbury, who always took the chivalrous view of things, was rather displeased at the withdrawal being allowed, and would have had the thing fought out. But Mr. Disraeli, who knew how shaky his own position was, was undoubtedly right in preferring the safer and more certain, if less glorious, kind of victory.

But the troubles of the Ministers were still before them, and Ellenborough's eccentricity was still not unconnected with these troubles. It had been generally agreed that the Mutiny and the state of affairs which it created necessitated an alteration in the already anomalous system by which the Company governed the greatest dependency of the British Crown. And part of the heritage to which Lord Derby succeeded was the drawing up of an India Bill. It was not a task for which his Government was well constituted. He himself had long lost the combination of energy and rapid intelligence which had enabled him five-and-twenty years earlier to accomplish, under Lord Grey, tasks only less difficult at the Irish and Colonial Offices. Mr. Disraeli was all his life notoriously an ill-hand at detail, and liable to be seduced by imaginative and fantastic projects. Lord Ellenborough, the chief Indian adviser of the Government, was one mass of flightiness and crotchet. No 'fancy franchise' ever devised was so whimsical as the original scheme in the Bill for getting together an Indian Council. Half of it was to be nominated, half elected, and the elected members' qualifications and constituencies savoured rather of the ingenious devisers of imaginary republics, from Campanella to Harrington, than of sober English statesmen. Some of the Councillors were to be officials, some traders; some were to be elected by Anglo-Indian

officers, Civil servants, and proprietors of stock; some by the chief commercial communities of the United Kingdom. Such a thing could never have worked, and was withdrawn. But the Government, with that rather mistaken humility which marked the whole proceedings of this Ministry, professed themselves ready to take the general sense of the House; and, as nobody was ready to turn them out, a Bill was at last arranged, and the thing got into working order, partly by the assistance of Lord John Russell, after unsuccessful opposition by Lord Palmerston and others in the Lower and by Lord Ellenborough in the Upper House. It was excellently conducted by Lord Stanley, who, under the Act, became Secretary of State for India. Jews were also admitted to Parliament in this session, Lord Derby, who had hitherto been one of the strongest opponents of the measure, giving up his opposition, as, in the circumstances, was perhaps politic. And in general the Government was fairly successful with its measures.

Another incident of this session, which was in a way a consequence of the India Bill, had rather lamentable consequences. The new arrangement required an additional Secretary of State, and in consequence of this Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton succeeded Lord Stanley at the Colonies — the office originally designed for him—on Lord Stanley's translation to India. That Mr. Gladstone's appointment as Extraordinary High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands was solely due to Sir Edward's initiative, though it has been sometimes said or inferred, is no doubt not the fact. Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone were always, I believe, on very good terms. With many widely differing tastes, they had some in common, and both were in different ways typical

Oxford men. In regard to no one had Lord Derby's tendency to re-unite himself with the Peelites been more frequently shown, and it is probable that he hoped that this appointment of Mr. Gladstone might pave the way to a reunion, which was certainly still not impossible. At any rate, Mr. Gladstone went to Corfu, and the results were disastrous. It is, of course, quite true—though the popular memory, with its odd mixture of going right on the whole and wrong in details, still sticks, I believe, to the wrong version—that the Ionian Isles were not immediately ceded to Greece, that the thing was not done till some years afterwards. When King Otho at last disappeared, it seemed to the effusive souls of Britons somehow or other desirable to endow his successor at their own cost. But it is very unlikely that Great Britain would have lost this most important footing in the Adriatic, which with Malta and Gibraltar gave us the naval command of the whole Western Mediterranean, if this mission had not taken place. It was not wholly Mr. Gladstone's fault. He endeavoured, as far as I can make out, to bear himself with becoming impartiality, and discouraged the ostentatious determination of the islanders to welcome him as a liberator. But he could not control his sympathies with 'oppressed nationalities,' which were already notorious in the case of Italy, and which Lord Malmesbury had humoured by securing the liberation of that very cheap martyr Poerio. And his attitude in regard to foreign dependencies and foreign policy generally was already so clearly defined that the Corfiotes were almost justified in regarding his mission to them as a hint that Great Britain cared not much about the retention of the Septinsular Republic under her protection. The result, whether immediate or delayed, of the mission was

accordingly this. For some thirty years the Ionian Islands have been Greek, with the result to themselves of the ruin and decay of the admirable administrative arrangements which half a century of British rule had conferred on them, with the attainment of considerably less autonomy than they possessed at that time, and with the possible solatium of having been recently able to carry out a *Judenhetze* which would certainly have been impossible under British rule. This gain to freedom has been balanced by the loss, as has been said, of a most important strategic position for England. So long as Austria and Italy are friends with each other and with ourselves, the thing may not matter. But even if this friendship continued, in the case of a European war, the defencelessness of this important group of naval stations would be a very serious evil, and might, if Greece (which is by no means improbable) took part with Russia or France, lead to a very deplorable state of things. Indeed, it might have been thought that anyone, save persons so utterly blind to the most elementary principles of foreign policy, as were almost all Liberals and most Conservatives in the middle of this century, would see that it is the general interest, and not merely the peculiar interest of England, that positions of this kind in the Mediterranean should be held by a strong Power which has no territorial designs, rather than by one of the strong Powers whose territories border the Mediterranean itself, still more than by a weak Power, which, in case of war, could betray them to one of the strong Powers, but could not hold them herself. At the time, however, hardly any Englishman looked at foreign policy from the broad point of view. Lord Palmerston, on matters that did not touch his traditional interests, was nearly as indifferent as his

Manchester enemies, and Mr. Disraeli was not much more 'sound on the goose' than Mr. Gladstone. To this latter, it must, I think, in fairness be admitted, the blame of the Ionian surrender which followed, though not immediately, his mission thither, belongs less than to those who sent him. When the surrender actually took place Lord Derby was vexed enough ; but he ought to have known that the mere granting an Extraordinary Commission was dangerous, and he ought to have known still better the idiosyncrasy of his Commissioner.

To Lord Derby himself, the most interesting and also the most disappointing, event of the year was no doubt his namesake race, in which Toxophilite, his horse, which had been made favourite, ran second to Beadsman, in the very middle of the great fight over Lord Ellenborough's Despatch. It would have been an interesting double event if he had won, and as far as early memory serves me, most people, except of course those who had money against the horse, were very sorry that he did not. But it was not so fated, and in the story of all those racing statesmen, from Lord Godolphin to Lord Hartington, who have held or been near to holding the position of Prime Minister, there has been no greater disappointment.

On the whole, however, and in spite of Beadsman, the Derby Government had got through their first session very well—quite surprisingly well, if the odds against them are considered. Unluckily, they had done it not exactly by backing down indiscriminately, but as Greville, who, wonderful to relate, was actually at this time himself anxious that they should act a bolder and more consistent part as a Conservative Government, says, 'by so much deference and concession, that even when their acts were reasonable, they

got little credit by them.' More unfortunately still, they were about to commit a mistake greater than any that had been hitherto committed. *Reculer pour mieux sauter* is an excellent rule ; *reculer pour se culbuter* is not. I remember a capital legend of a person who, in some midnight freak, found himself without any sort of weapon in the face of two or three ruffians, who threatened robbery, and perhaps worse. He saw some yards off a heap of builders' rubbish, with a crowbar lying on it. Thereupon he proceeded, with elaborate supplications for mercy to his persecutors, to sidle backwards towards this heap as best he could. Having reached it, he caught up the crowbar, stretched one fellow on the pavement, and put the rest to flight victoriously. This was in the highest degree creditable. But if he had gained the heap only to sit down on it and turn out his pockets, I, for one, should not have blamed the vagabonds if they had applied the crowbar to him.

The recklessness (if it be not something worse) with which history is often written has seldom been shown in a more unpleasant light than by the attempts which have been made to make out that Mr. Disraeli, and not Lord Derby, was responsible for the Conservative Reform Bill of 1859. This carelessness, or something worse, repeated itself, as we shall see, eight years later. But there we have hardly any documents to guide us. Here we have some, together with all probability at the back of them. Lord Derby had, at his entrance into office—and we know that he was not much in the habit of taking other people's advice as to such statements—distinctly apologised for Conservative Reform, and had all but promised a measure affecting representation. He had not a year before, and when there was a chance of his coming in, written, as we have seen, to

Lord Malmesbury most explicitly deprecating any rash language on the subject, and promising respectful consideration to any Liberal scheme. In all the references that we have in first-hand documents to the subject of the actual Bill, he is spoken of as being the prime mover. It is known that he was urged by Lord Stanley to make the measure far more democratic than it was. And when the dissensions in the Cabinet began, Lord Malmesbury—who, even if he had been, instead of a decidedly clever, if not very learned, man, the imbecile that it used to be thought witty to represent him, must have known the facts—speaks of Mr. Disraeli as being faithful to Lord Derby throughout. Besides, the whole probabilities are in this sense. Lord Derby had made not the slightest difficulty about fighting in the front rank for the Grey Reform Bill, had not left the Whigs on any such question, and had never, so far as I know, made a single speech against the principle of Reform in his life. I do not myself think that he ever recognised, till the day of his death, that alterations which, in the last century, might have been what is called in business a mere matter of account, were, whether unavoidable or not, very different things now. With no objection in principle, habituated to the thing in practice, prepared for years to consider Reform coolly enough, why should he not now undertake it in order, if possible, to get out of the galling state of tutelage and government by sufferance in which he found himself? I think myself that he was wrong; but I have no doubt that he did the thing of his own motion, and without any prompting. That Mr. Disraeli had—that he could have had, either at this or any other time—no objection to Reform on principle, we know. But there is not the slightest reason for supposing that it was to his influence that the taking up of Reform in 1859

was due, though there is much reason for believing that the rather fantastic shape which the actual proposal took may have been due to it.

Before, however, the thing had got so far as to take definite shape at all the difficulties began. On the one hand, Lord Stanley thought the projected measure so insufficient as to talk of resigning; on the other, nearly half the Cabinet disliked its introduction. Lord Hardwicke and General Peel thought it went too far; Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley, who made up for very moderate abilities by honesty and simplicity of character, had even stronger objections, and on February 9 resigned outright. They were followed by Lord Henry Lennox. It can hardly be said that the Cabinet was strengthened, moderate as were the abilities of the outgoing members, by the accession of Mr. Sotheron Estcourt and Lord Donoughmore. But the rank and file of the party accepted the Bill quietly, if not cheerfully, and it was resolved to go forward with it.

Putting aside the propriety or necessity of its introduction at all (though, as the course of events showed, there was no necessity whatever), it must be confessed to have been a rather absurd measure. It does not, indeed, lie in the mouths of Liberals to object to its fancy franchises, for they were merely an attempt to meet the views of many of the most philosophical Liberals and Radicals of the time, such as Mr. Mill in England and M. Scherer in France. The Forty-Shilling freeholders were to be disfranchised, but a queer multitude of persons with savings-bank books, Masters of Arts and so forth, were summoned to fill their places. Whether the actual leaders ever thought that the Bill would pass or not, nobody else did, and even some of those Ministers who had not chosen to break

away singly from Lord Derby, hoped for a general resignation. This was not to be, though what was afterwards called a cave was formed among the Tories of the Lower House, which took away the last chance of success on the second reading. Lord John Russell joined battle in reference to the Forty-Shilling disfranchisement, and was successful by 330 to 291. It would clearly have been the most dignified, as well as the wisest, course to resign ; but Lord Derby thought otherwise, and obtained leave to dissolve instead. It is not too easy to make out the exact meaning of the speech which he delivered on the occasion, and the burden of which was a complaint of the increasing difficulty of party government. If it was a complaint that the Whigs did not put up quietly with having their clothes stolen, it was a little unreasonable and more than a little unwise. It had somewhat more justification in reference to the attitude of Palmerston, and indeed of general criticism on the conduct of foreign affairs, in the very difficult crisis which had been brought on by the movement for Italian unification and the impending war between France and Austria. It is now known that the Derby Ministry did all it could to smooth things, and that Lord Malmesbury's management contrasts very favourably indeed with that of Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon in 1853, that of Lord John Russell at Vienna, and that of Lord Palmerston on more occasions than one. But these distinguished persons and their partisans, and the press generally, gave or took the word that Lord Malmesbury muddled, and it served.

It served all the more that there was a great deal of silly pro-Italian sentiment in England at the time, which was fostered and fomented, not only by Mr. Gladstone, who

had indeed voted with the Government in the last division, but by Lord Palmerston and Lord John. This feeling was further increased by a still more foolish idea that Court influence was working in a pro-Austrian direction. Very few Englishmen were then acquainted with the scandalous manœuvring of Cavour, which made his own instruments, the most fervid Italian patriots, sick. Still, though the affair came to a crisis just as the elections were on, the result was to some extent a justification of the policy of dissolving. The Conservative party gained considerably, returning with a minority, but one increased to 315, or within less than a score of equality with their enemies. Those enemies, however, had at last made up their differences, and agreed to unite in turning out the Government, for on nothing else were they united. A great meeting was held at Willis's Rooms, attended not only by Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, but even by Mr. Bright, who was popularly and not wrongly supposed to regard Lord Palmerston as something like an incarnation of the evil one. This practically settled the matter. And on June 5, in an extremely full House, the present Duke of Devonshire was put up to move a vote of want of confidence on the Address. This was carried by 323 to 310 at half-past two in the morning. By noon, a Cabinet Council having been held, Lord Derby set off to resign his office, the resignation being accepted, but gilded by the very unusual honour of an 'extra' Garter—that is to say, one given to him, though there was no vacancy among the ordinary knights. Lord Malmesbury's comment is curious (ii. 188, 189) :—

> Thus fell the second Administration of Lord Derby. With a dead majority against him, it is evident that he could not for long have maintained his ground, but it is equally certain that he would not have been defeated on the Address if Disraeli had

previously laid on the table the Blue-book containing the Italian and French correspondence with the Foreign Office. Why he chose not to do so I never knew, nor did he ever explain it to me; but I presented it to the House of Lords at the last moment when I found he would not give it to the House of Commons, and at least twelve or fourteen members of Parliament who voted against us in the fatal division came out of their way at different times and places to assure me that, had they read that correspondence before the debate, they never would have voted for an amendment which, as far as our conduct respecting the War was concerned, was thoroughly undeserved, we having done everything that was possible to maintain peace. Mr. Cobden was one of these, and expressed himself most strongly to me on the subject. It may be asked why Lord Derby did not himself order this Blue-book to be produced; but the fact was that he wished to resign, worn out by repeated attacks of gout and the toil of his office, and was indifferent to continuing the struggle. When, a few days after, the Blue-book was read, I received as many congratulations upon its contents as during the past year I had suffered attacks from the Opposition and from the 'Press,' and many members repeated over and over again that, had they read it, they would not have supported the amendment.

The writer, who had been very bitterly and very unjustly attacked, was perhaps not in the most judicial frame of mind, but still he can hardly have been far wrong.

And so ended Lord Derby's second Government, killed by its own sins, as I very frankly think, but on an immediate pretext and occasion on which it was certainly not guilty. So much has been said already on what appears to me its real fault, so much that I should have to say has been said even earlier in reference to 1852, and will have to be repeated later on other texts, that it seems unnecessary to say much here. The outgoing Ministers had at least the

comfort of a sardonic laugh in reference to the ostensible subjects of their fall. For their successors had to drop Reform with scalded fingers, and were utterly disgusted, as was the country, with the course which events took in Italy.

CHAPTER VIII

OPPOSITION ONCE MORE

Exceptional strength of the Conservative Opposition—Compact with Palmerston—Failure of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill—The Paper Duty affair—Lord Derby's razzias in the House of Lords—The Schleswig-Holstein matter—'Unmuzzling' the Roman Catholics.

THUS the Tory party were once more in opposition, and to a certain extent by their own fault. They left office, however, with better opinions on the whole than had accompanied their retirement in 1852, and with far less internal soreness and dissension than had been felt either then or later, after the mistaken refusal to take office in 1855. Although beaten, they were still very strong in numbers—perhaps the strongest united minority which has in recent times been seen in the House. Indeed, the establishment or re-establishment of the Irish party as a separate group, and the tendency of the new constituencies to swing round *en masse*, and give thumping majorities to one party or the other at general elections, have entirely altered the conditions of English party government since the time of which we are treating, though it is not impossible that they may, as natural conditions are apt to do, re-establish themselves. One great difficulty, at any rate, was removed. There was no longer any thought of calling back the erring Peelite sheep to the Tory fold, and from this time forward they

took their places in the Liberal ranks as Liberals pure and simple. The will-o'-the-wisp which had lured Lord Derby again and again off the path disappeared for good and all.

But it was still not in his notions to hark back to or to excogitate a distinct Tory policy. Indeed, from this time forward his reluctance to take office, which had always been considerable, seems to have turned into a settled design not to take it if he could possibly help. He used his strength in a novel and curious way—in a way, indeed, which had never been previously pursued for any but a very inconsiderable space of time. It was long known to a few, and suspected by others who studied politics, that there was something like a regular understanding between Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston during the long Parliament which only ended by effluxion of time in 1865. The facts are now accessible to all in Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs. The direct understanding which was arranged at least as early as the winter of 1860 concerned foreign policy. In regard to Reform, it must have been facilitated by the ridiculous fate of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill earlier in that year, and the complete failure to get up any popular excitement over the action of the Lords in regard to the Paper-duties, while in reference to both these matters Palmerston had had experience of the strength of the Conservative party, not merely in the Upper but in the Lower House. Therefore it was that the compact, written or unwritten, lasted, though once at least, in 1862, we know, and Lord Palmerston knew, that Lord Derby could have turned him out. It lasted, to the disgust of the Radicals, perhaps to the modified satisfaction of the Conservative party, but to the good, on the whole, of England. After the unfortunate fashion in which Lord Derby had begun coquetting with Reform, I do

not know that he could have done much better. He could not have come into office himself, except in circumstances which did not occur, without making a new attempt, which would either have been a sham, like the Bill of 1859, or have turned by degrees into a real 'shooting Niagara,' like that of 1867. His error, if error it was (and certainly the party proper did not grow stronger, either in the interval or at the general election when it came off), lay further back than in the adoption of his policy of ballast and trimming, and would certainly not have been cured if he had adopted any other policy now.

The two matters, however, which have been referred to are very important, as showing the temper of the nation and the entirely unnecessary character of the violent changes which were soon afterwards introduced in the reaction from this period of calm. The history of the 1860 Reform Bill is one of the most comical of all such histories. The history of the Paper-duties agitation is not one of the least instructive.

The story of both is all the more curious because the new Government, in the very earliest days of 1860, had scored a great success in the contests on the French Commercial Treaty and Mr. Gladstone's budget—a success which is admitted, by friends and foes alike, to have been almost entirely due to the personal efforts of Mr. Gladstone himself. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Gladstone's general character and career, I suppose no one who has any knowledge of English history or politics will deny that few greater feats have ever been performed than the mustering, chiefly by mere force of individual advocacy, of a majority of 116 in favour of a budget which revolutionised English commercial policy, which affected all manner of interests,

and which was not very warmly beloved, even by all the Chancellor's own colleagues, in a House where the normal Government majority was not much more than the odd sixteen. The hour may have some credit, but the man must have more. It seemed, however, as if in obtaining this great success the energy of the Government's supporters was exhausted : and, indeed, the Paper-duty defeat was a kind of backwater of the budget affair itself. The Reform Bill, however, came first. Considering that it was, professedly at least, on Reform that Lord Derby had been beaten, that after great searchings of heart the less Radical members of the Government had been got to agree to an altered franchise, that Lord John Russell had made up his mind to introduce his Bill as a great historic fact, on the very same day of the very same month as that on which he had introduced the Bill of 1831, and that the most anxious countings had been made on both sides of what would happen, great things might have been expected. Nay, Palmerston was said to have declared that he would dissolve if the Bill were not carried.

The Bill was brought in, and, like most of the Reform Bills of this transition period, it was mild enough. It lowered the county franchise to ten, the borough to six pounds ; it reduced a certain number of two-member small boroughs to one, and gave the seats thus set free to the large towns, the populous counties, and the University of London. Further, it introduced three-corner constituencies —an excellent device, which, after being actually tried later and working very well, was unfortunately abandoned. The Bill met at first with a treacherous appearance of success. It was not opposed on the second reading, but it was once very nearly counted out—a thing unheard of for

a great Government measure. It was not very savagely debated by the Tories, but it was relentlessly bombarded with amendments from the Government side. Nobody wished it well, unless it may have been Lord John himself, the Manchester group, and some, but probably not all, of the other Radicals. The other Ministerialists hated it so much that irregular *pourparlers* appear to have been opened by them to see whether Lord Derby would throw it out in the House of Lords, to which he very properly replied that, if those who did not like it had not the courage and honesty to oppose it in the Commons, the Upper House should not, if he could help it, do their work for them. But he told Lord Clarendon that if any respectable number of Liberals would openly oppose the Bill, the Tories would support them *en masse*. This was not done, and it was not necessary. After dragging on for more than three months, the measure, which had been brought in with a flourish of trumpets by a strong Government, on which that Government was to dissolve if it was not carried, and so forth, was simply withdrawn. Lord John in withdrawing it, indeed, hinted at another, but everyone knew that there would be none, nor did anybody of importance want one. In fact, I very much doubt whether, if the Reform craving had not been so industriously stimulated by the competitive solicitations of both parties in 1866–67, any Reform would have been really demanded even then, though it might have been. Nobody who actually mixed with the Hyde Park crowds on the memorable occasion of the railings can believe that they cared about Reform much more than they cared about quaternions.

The Paper-duty business was another severe annoyance for the Radical party in the Cabinet This scheme was

part of Mr. Gladstone's general budget proposals, and was obnoxious to divers persons for divers reasons, some of them rather good ones. It was probably objected to by not a few who called themselves Free-traders, but who drew a distinction between letting in food stuffs and raw materials and letting in manufactured products. The paper-makers naturally did not like it. But the chief political objection was the probability, which was, in fact, a certainty, of the impetus which the proposal would give to the multiplication of cheap newspapers and cheap books generally. I once knew a man who said that there was no good in newspapers, except that they provided incomes for persons who were not always devoid of merit; and in the House of Commons in 1860 there were probably not a few members who would have struck out even this saving clause, while it is certain that the more you multiply books the more you multiply rubbish. It is now known that Lord Palmerston himself disliked the reduction much, and that others of his party disliked it more. The third reading in the Commons was only carried by a majority of 9, which on a budget proposal of importance is virtually equivalent to defeat.

It seemed, accordingly, that this was an occasion where the powers of the House of Lords might be rightly used. That they were technically applicable cannot be disputed by any person whose acquaintance with constitutional history is derived from any better source than recent speeches and newspaper articles. A Committee of the House of Commons itself, whose extreme and very proper jealousy of its own rights in all disputes between the Houses has remained unaltered throughout all the changes in its constitution, decided by a large majority that the course taken

by the Lords was not unconstitutional. That course was distinct enough : a majority of 89 rejecting the proposal, which was accordingly defeated for the year. An immense hubbub was raised by the extreme Radicals, but it is admitted by spokesmen of these Radicals themselves that the country cared very little about the matter. The debate had been remarkable for a fine speech from Lord Lyndhurst, now nearly ninety, on the constitutional question, and for a very eloquent winding-up by Lord Derby. Mr. Gladstone, it was said, threatened resignation, and clamoured for a resolution of censure, the proposing of which, it is nearly certain, would have resulted in a downright defeat of the Government. I do not know whether it was on this particular occasion that Lord Palmerston made the immortal remark that Greville has recorded. He, like Lord Derby previously, had a horse entered for the great race. Says the Prime Minister to his Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of the Paper-duties, 'Of course you are mortified and disappointed ; but your disappointment is nothing to mine, who had a horse with whom I hoped to win the Derby, and he went amiss at the last moment.' The grammar is a little slipshod ; the sense, I think, must have seemed to Mr. Gladstone to deserve the adjective which he applied on another celebrated occasion to another person—'hellish.' And really, considering all things, it was a little so. It is not, I believe, known whether the Premier's 'drawer-full of resignations' was actually enriched by one more at this moment ; but there would have been every human excuse for Mr. Gladstone if it had been. As it was, no harm was done in any way. The Paper-duty, when the House of Commons thoroughly made up its mind, disappeared, and 'Satan's invisible world displayed,'

in Mr. Carlyle's interpretation of that phrase, got an opportunity of displaying itself more freely still. An important constitutional point—that it is the right and the duty of the Upper House,[1] when the Lower does not seem fully to have made up its mind on its own special function of Supply, to refer the matter for consideration—was established, and probably the display or want of display of public feeling gave the Government a useful indication as to the withdrawal of the Reform Bill.

A generally careful writer, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, has used of this transaction the unfortunate phrase—'It was opposed to the spirit of the constitution, whatever might be its letter.' What is the letter of the English Constitution? It is to be found, so far as it exists at all, in a considerable number of Acts of Parliament, in none of which, beyond all dispute, will there be found anything either authorising or disallowing the proceeding. On the contrary, to

[1] This seems as good a place as another for a short explanation why I use the phrases 'Upper House' and 'Lower House,' which of late years have excited wrath in a certain class of sensitive Radical. It is with no intention either to exalt the House of Lords or to belittle the House of Commons. I do not know that 'upper case' in printer's language is more worthy than 'lower case,' or that an 'upper story' is a more dignified or creditable place of abode than a 'lower'; but in both instances, and in that under more immediate consideration, the expressions happen to answer to the facts. When a man is moved to the House of Lords from the House of Commons, and when the very persons who make the objection I am noticing do not like him, they say that he is 'kicked upstairs.' A Bill is sent 'down' from the House of Lords, 'up' from the House of Commons. The order of the estates of the realm is Lords Spiritual, Lords Temporal, and Commons, not *vice versâ*. The Lords are mentioned first in formal descriptions of and addresses to Parliament. All these things may be bad old relics of corrupt and insensate ideas, or they may not be; but they are facts, and it is well that language should, as far as possible, conform to facts.

mention nothing else, the famous 'Tacking' dispute, which is the leading case on the subject, goes to show that by letter and spirit both the Lords *had* the power they here exercised, and that its possible misuse could only be evaded by what was perhaps the greatest breach of the 'spirit of the Constitution' ever attempted.

If this were a history of the Tory party (a thing which would be well worth the doing), a good deal might be said of the incidents of this very curious and instructive Parliament. As it is only a history, or rather a sketch of a history, of Lord Derby, the chief events of whose life during the time were extra-Parliamentary, it would be improper to dwell much on them here. After 1860 we lose the assistance of Greville's Journals, invaluable for almost all political events of his time, but nowhere more valuable than in relation to Lord Derby and the Tory party of the middle of the century. Greville's temper and his partisanship make every statement of his matter to be most carefully weighed and checked. But his information from almost all parties, except the extreme Radicals, was until quite the last days extraordinary; his abilities were great, and the point of view from which he wrote was one which is now almost irrecoverable. He somewhere says that he 'detested Lord Derby as a politician,' and he seems to have had a curious and not quite intelligible personal jealousy of him. Yet the two were in a manner friends, they had been acquaintances moving in the same world for a long series of years, and Greville brought to the subject what hardly any other actual writer of memoirs did, the knowledge and attitude of mind of the pre-Reform 'upper classes' who busied themselves with politics. It is not probable, but certain, that it is the opinion of persons who do not in the least take the High Tory view

of politics that the disuse of this attitude is a grave misfortune. It was partly traditional, unconscious, inherited; partly the result of the confinement of political interests and chances, except in the rarest cases, to a very small number of persons, who began their initiation in the art very young. The more thoughtless among our modern political critics seem to undervalue this advantage very much as the more thoughtless among military critics undervalue the traditional art of war. Politics can hardly have altered more with the advance towards democracy than war has with the alteration of means of communication, the perfecting of arms of precision, and so forth. And yet we find that battles are fought very much in the old places, and decided by very much the old factors.

Lord Malmesbury, our other principal first-hand authority, had not this advantage to the same extent as Greville, for he had taken to politics much later; and though his actual statements are much more trustworthy, his comments and glosses are those of a man of less native shrewdness. Of those Cabinet Ministers who went with Lord Derby into opposition, there is not, I think, one left alive, except his son and the present Duke of Rutland; while of the Cabinet which succeeded them, only the Duke of Argyll and Mr. Gladstone remain. One could hardly have a better instance of the truth of the old rule which limits a 'generation' to thirty years.

The party, as a party, did little during the five years' 'truce of God' which followed 1860, and probably were, as I have hinted, none the better for it. Lord Derby's own action in the House of Lords was, despite his increasing gout, frequent and remarkable. Indeed, many people, and those not friends only, are of opinion that his peculiar style

of Parliamentary eloquence, which was a sort of cross between the set speech of older days and the conversational manner of the present, went on increasing in vigour and spirit till the Silence caught him. He was no doubt particularly felicitous in his sessional, or almost sessional, reviews of Lord John Russell's foreign policy. In these and other speeches of his on foreign policy during this period occurred, perhaps, a majority of the sharp detached *mots* by which he is best known. Here came his quotation from *Macbeth* about the various animals 'classed All by the name of dogs,' and the comparison of them to the heterogeneous inhabitants of the Italian peninsula. Here was the contrast of Lord Melbourne with his 'Can't you let it alone?' and Lord Russell with his disposition to settle everything off hand. Here was the still more famous charge of 'meddling and muddling,' and the citation of Bottom the Weaver. In fact, there was no one with whom Lord Derby more thoroughly enjoyed himself than with Lord Russell. But there was a certain unreality even about these utterances, and the penalty of this unreality was paid when it was time to throw away the scabbard, on the occasion of the oppression of Denmark by Germany in 1864.

This, as it seems to me, was the one occasion in the last half-century when England ought to have plunged into war, with allies or without allies : and it is known that, if the allies were not ready, it was her own fault. And there is no doubt that the majority of the Tory party thought so too. But there were various subtle influences at work, and of some of these influences it is difficult even now to speak very positively. Lord Derby's interest in the matter was no new one. Much earlier, when he had been first in power, there had been a perhaps natural, but

unfortunate, tendency in high quarters to take the German side, and he had, in Lord Palmerston's opinion, got into some disgrace there by being steadfast on the side of Denmark. In October, 1862—four months after the reluctance of the Conservatives to turn Palmerston out had practically saved him on the amendment to the motion of enquiry into the national expenditure—Lord Derby was quite excited about the subject, as a letter of his to Lord Malmesbury shows. I have sometimes regretted that he never himself, in any of his Ministries, took the subject of foreign policy in hand. It is true that neither his habits nor his health might have stood the labour of the most laborious office in the Government. But he had all the *ethos* of a great Foreign Minister, which may be said to consist in two points only—a resolute determination to make the country respected and to defend its interests, and a faculty of taking large views undeterred by sentimental considerations and petty prejudices. For the time the difficulty passed away or at least ceased to affect England, Lord John (who was now Lord Russell, by the way) 'recanting,' as Lord Derby has it, his despatch in the German sense, which had gone entirely against the previous assurances of both Liberal and Tory Governments. But the matter was bound to come to a crisis, and did. The same influences were brought to bear again, and others with them, when the King of Denmark died in November, 1863. Lord Derby's own pledges to Lord Palmerston came to a certain extent into play, and I doubt whether Mr. Disraeli had yet got rid of that inclination towards non-intervention which he had shown earlier. The case, however, was so flagrant that it was impossible to avoid joining battle when the clearest pledges of England were being violated. Lord Malmesbury says that Lord

Derby was quite Danish, that all the party were, and indeed, considering the influences above-mentioned, and the comparative rust of the Tories, the memorable divisions of July show it decisively. The majority on Lord Malmesbury's attack on the foreign policy of Government in the Lords was 9, which might have been anticipated. But the Government only escaped defeat in the Commons by 18, nearly fifty members being paired or absent. Lord Derby had one of his worst fits of gout on the occasion, and there was reason for it. There were probably not fifty men among those who in both Houses voted for the Government who did not know that they were doing a disgraceful thing. Nor could anything show this better than the immortal bathos with which Lord Palmerston, an old man, it is true, but one whose natural force was not abated, and who had all his life had the keenest sense of humour, concluded his speech on the occasion. Never, probably, except from Bob Acres on the stage, had the like been heard. 'If,' said the Minister who had once, and more than once, been ready to set Europe by the ears for far less reason—'if the Government had reason to expect to see at Copenhagen the horrors of a town taken by assault, the destruction of property, the sacrifice of the lives,' &c. &c. &c.—*if* all these things were imminent, what then? Why he 'did not mean to say that, *if* any of those events were likely to happen—the position of this country might not be subject to reconsideration!'

Except in this instance and one other, the foreign affairs of the period did not touch England close. The difficulties of the American Civil War were not a Government question, for the strong division of public feeling on that subject was a cross division as regarded politics.

Everybody, except an insignificant minority, agreed on the *Trent* matter, and most people agreed about the *Alabama*. There was slight, though noisy, sympathy with the Polish insurrection of 1863; and the Chinese War, the settling-down of the Italian difficulty, and so forth, roused little party antagonism. One of the matters last mentioned—the American Civil War—indeed concerned Lord Derby in the highest degree, but it was in a non-political manner, and will be dealt with in the next chapter. On most, if not all, of the others, he displayed that eloquence, at once easy and commanding, in which he had now neither equal nor second in the House of Lords, and which was hardly equalled, except by Mr. Bright, in the House of Commons. Of his action on other matters it is unnecessary to say much, for it was practically identical with his action on these. In withdrawing the famous amendment in 1862 to a motion of Mr. Stansfeld's on the national expenses (which, if pushed, would very likely have turned out the Government, and which Mr. Disraeli would fain have pushed), Mr. Walpole said that the noble Earl at the head of his party had said, publicly in his place and privately among his friends, that he did not wish to displace the noble Viscount opposite. This practically sums up Lord Derby's action throughout the period.

On one matter, however, I must say a few words, because I think that a forerunner of mine, in writing about Lord Derby, has gone wrong on it. It concerns one of Lord Derby's famous imprudences, a speech about 'unmuzzling' the Roman Catholics by rendering the terms of their oaths less stringent than they had been left in 1829. This 'unhappy little speech,' Mr. Kebbel thinks, deprived the Conservative party of the Roman Catholic vote, lost

five-and-twenty seats, and had other deplorable consequences. I shall endeavour, in generally summing up Lord Derby's character, to point out what I believe to have been unfortunate in his attitude towards ecclesiastical questions; but I cannot think for a moment that this was one of the occasions on which misfortune, still more anything else, could be charged. Although it was excessively difficult steering between the various parties in the Church of England, the Dissenters, and the Roman Catholics, I can think of no period during Lord Derby's lifetime in which it was in the least degree worth while to go out of the way to attempt to secure by truckling to them, or even to avoid offending, the Roman Catholics of England and Scotland. On the contrary, all the Protestant feeling of the country—which was still very strong, though Lord Derby, with the Papal aggression business in his mind, may have thought it stronger than it was—would have been up in arms, and its estrangement would have far more than compensated any possible gain. And another thing I think is very clear—that no majority obtained by means of the Roman Catholic vote could have been of any good to the Tories. For such a majority must in those days have been Irish wholly. It is absolutely certain that Mr. Gladstone would have used, as he actually did use, the ruins of the Irish Church as a step back to office; and where then would have been the Tory majority? If anyone says that this particular measure was not worth opposing, I have nothing to say. I should not have opposed it myself, I think. But if Lord Derby thought fit to do so, he was quite right not to be deterred by such a fallacious and bruised reed as Irish support. He knew well enough that in the game of bribery the Tory party can never win, and it is a great pity that he did not always act

on the knowledge. In the next political chapter we shall see him acting in a different and, as I think, a far more disastrous way. But meanwhile we must for a time diverge to two important episodes in his life which helped to fill up this interregnum—his relations with the Cotton Famine Relief Fund, which displayed his remarkable faculties for general business, and the publication of his translation of Homer, in connection with which the whole subject of the literary and more purely intellectual side of his character may be advantageously discussed.

CHAPTER IX

THE COTTON FAMINE—LITERARY WORK

Lord Derby retires from the Turf—The Cotton Famine and his share in dealing with it—His Latin writings—His minor translations into English—His 'Iliad'—Criticism of it, and comparison with other translations.

Lord Derby's occupations between 1860 and 1866 were not limited to what has been called governing England *en société anonyme* with Lord Palmerston, nor even to those other and rather numerous avocations from politics with which his fortunate combination of circumstances, temperment, and tastes had supplied him. From one of these avocations, indeed, either choice or chance called him back about the middle of the period. He ceased to keep racehorses in 1863, and sold his racing stud, exceptions being made for favourites, such as the famous mare Canezou, who had won the One Thousand and the Goodwood Cup with other great races, though she attained not to the first three, the Oaks, the Derby, and the Leger. She was kept at Knowsley as a pet, and lived to a great age, surviving Lord Derby himself. Toxophilite's ill luck has already been referred to, and with him and Canezou—which, being interpreted, means a kind of feminine garment, a body without sleeves—Lord Derby missed his best chances of winning the two great Epsom races and the chief Doncaster event. But

he was fairly lucky with minor events, and his winnings in stakes are said to have averaged about five thousand a year during the many years in which he himself used the turf. Earlier he had, in the old days of his grandfather, managed that famous sportsman's stable for him. He betted but little, though he did not, as some sportsmen of his class have done, abstain from betting altogether; and he may be said to have, on the whole, raced entirely for the sport. Among the not very numerous personal anecdotes of him, unconnected with politics, which are in print, those told by Greville of his doings at Newmarket, at his grandfather's villa of The Oaks, and so forth, are among the best known. They are generally ill-natured (for Greville was as keen a sportsman as Lord Derby himself, and less lucky, and his curious jealousy of the greater man who had so many of his own tastes is apparent throughout), but characteristic enough. His trainer was the mighty John Scott, and the history of his general performances on the turf is to be found in the books of the chronicles of that institution, which are many, though it has not perhaps yet had its sufficient prose-bard.

It would, however, have been very little amusement to Lord Derby to keep a racing establishment and a racing 'commissioner,' when he could not attend and supervise training and racing himself, and his increasing infirmities no doubt induced him to give up the sport at a much earlier age than Lord Palmerston did. The occupations to which I have referred above were of a different kind. One of them can hardly be said to have been self-sought, and might easily have been avoided by a man in broken health who had great political calls on him, though the other was among the traditional resources of old age and valetu-

dinarianism. The first was the great expense of time, money, and labour which Lord Derby bestowed on the task of meeting the Cotton Famine of 1861–5, and which, I think, had not a little to do with turning Lancashire from one of the most Radical into one of the most Tory districts of England. The second was the amusement of Englishing Homer, which resulted in his printing a sample privately in 1862, and following it up with the whole Iliad two years later.

The business of the Cotton Famine is, next to the achievements of those early years when he was Irish and Colonial Secretary, the chief and sufficient refutation of the charge of laziness frequently brought against Lord Derby. That he was not one of those persons who must always be at some serious occupation may be granted. But he had a most uncommon faculty of 'putting through' work when he took to it, and he by no means shirked it when it offered itself. Things, when they are once historic, get forgotten so soon, that even in less than thirty years the Cotton Famine may not arouse very distinct memories in all minds. Indeed some particulars of it are almost necessary in order to set forth what it was that Lord Derby really did. Nothing can be more unfair than the sneer implied in the phrase of a historian of the calamity (who, it is true, afterwards uses complimentary words enough of Lord Derby himself), to the effect that 'the representatives of Lancashire in the Houses of Parliament did not permit the gaieties of the Exhibition season of 1862 wholly to divert their attention from the distress which prevailed in their home county.' Nor is it true that, as has also been said, the landowners of Lancashire generally were slow to help. If they had been, the circumstances of the case

were indeed so peculiar that they might have been excused for some backwardness. The import figures of cotton which are given in the books do not by any means tell the whole case, striking as is the curve they present. In 1860 and in 1866, the year before and the year after the famine, the imports in millions of pounds were nearly equal, reaching in each year a little less than fifteen hundred in round numbers. Falling but little in 1861 (during only part of which were the Southern ports closed), they dropped at a run to rather over five hundred in 1862. They then rose, fresh sources having been tapped, to something short of seven hundred in 1863, to nearly nine hundred in 1864, and to not much short of a thousand in 1865. But it is very well known now that the factory-owners had accumulated a vast amount of unsold goods when the war broke out, and that they were anything but sorry to diminish the output. More than that, the stock of unworked cotton at this time in England was almost unprecedentedly large, and, after the pinch of famine began to be felt, cotton was actually exported from English ports by scores of thousands of bales. Men who were not connected with the manufacturing interest, who derived no benefit from the manufactures, who had indeed been deprived by the manufacturers but a very few years before of no small part of the profits of their lands owing to the repeal of the Corn-laws, might have been almost—I do not say quite—excused if they had hesitated to interfere in a matter where (for Lancashire people are peculiar) they might have met with snubs rather than gratitude, and where the distress might at least colourably be asserted to be in part, if not wholly, a result of selfish rigging of the market by interested persons. Lord Palmerston, who had old scores to pay off with the Manchester School, and who

was nearly as reckless with his tongue as Lord Derby, though somehow or other his recklessness was less often visited on him, said bluntly in open Parliament that the manufacturers had sold the cotton which they ought to have kept to work their mills, regardless of the starving people around them. And though the assertion put Mr. Cobden into a great rage (which was probably in part its object), there was some colour for it.

But the Lancashire landlords by no means contented themselves with any such recrimination. As a matter of fact, they bestirred themselves nobly, and none more so than Lord Derby. He did not at first take the actual lead in the matter, for he was not lord-lieutenant of the county, and he was less concerned as a landlord with the actual cotton-manufacturing districts than others. At the first meeting at Bridgwater House, in 1862, he spoke, and though Lord Ellesmere was at the time appointed chairman, Lord Derby soon succeeded him, and became the life and soul of the movement. From the very first he advocated, if he did not actually suggest, the lines on which, as long as possible, the consolidated relief funds were actually administered—those of not supplementing parish relief, or waiting till the 'hands' were driven on it, but of as far as possible anticipating actual pauperisation. As chairman of what became the Central Executive Committee he had the very reverse of a sinecure. None of the elaborate steps—taken with a thoroughness never before or since equalled in such a case—for insuring that no deserving case should be neglected, and at the same time that the public money should not be wasted, were taken without his Committee's direct authorisation and enquiry, and almost all documents of importance were signed by the chairman. This constant

hum-drum labour of desk and board work dwarfs the more showy and splendid, but far less costly, services which Lord Derby did to the cause with his tongue and with his purse. He had already, as I have said, spoken wisely as well as eloquently at the Bridgwater House meeting. He had, in Parliament and out of it, to meet the reproaches of his own friends on the subject of rates-in-aid and relief measures generally. There was a certain justice, though also a not inconsiderable confusion, in the plea of those West-country and other ratepayers and landowners who urged that in their own parishes the rates were habitually far higher than even in famine-struck Lancashire and other cotton counties, and who observed that nobody proposed to give *them* relief. Lord Malmesbury was one of these, and he has very honestly given a letter of Lord Derby's to him on the subject. In fact, in one Union—that of Glossop—the rates before the worst was over actually reached more than twelve shillings in the pound.

The chief single occasion on which Lord Derby put his means and talents at the service of the distress was the great county meeting of December 2, 1862, which was held partly to stimulate efforts, and partly to remove the reproach which had been freely cast in the south of England on the wealthier classes of the district generally. Lord Derby, who had already subscribed, and did again later subscribe handsomely, on this occasion put his name down for 5000*l.* at once, the largest subscription, I think, which has, or at any rate had up to that time, been given by any Englishman at a single time for a single purpose to a public fund. On a principle well known to expert charity-beggars, this drew a total subscription of 70,000*l.* in the room, and 130,000*l.* on the occasion. But the speech which Lord Derby delivered

probably, in this newspaper-reading and subscription-giving country, brought in much more than his actual gift. It met the grumbles of the South by an exact description of what had been done, which was on the whole a very great and a very worthy work. It appealed for help to do more by a further description of the needs and sufferings of the situation, not in the least overdone, but drawn with that admirable combination of vigour and good sense which always distinguished Lord Derby's oratory. And, not content with these two things, it contained an extremely politic and, on the whole, quite just panegyric of the behaviour of the 'hands' in their trouble. The fact was that Lord Derby knew the average Lancashire man of the lower classes pretty well, and was on very good terms with him—much better, perhaps, than for want of knowledge he was on with the middle and lower-upper classes, either in Lancashire or elsewhere. And the 'hands' certainly did behave well, despite some oddities of demeanour peculiar to them. They were very angry at, and almost entirely recalcitrant to, any kind of labour test; and, in particular, though scores of thousands of women and girls were out of work, it was almost impossible to get them to do any domestic service. I lived in Manchester for some months, within a year or two of the time when the famine ended, and I remember hearing all sorts of quaint stories—told with no ill-nature, by men and by ladies who had worked all through the distress—of the almost entire want of apparent gratitude in the persons relieved. But I can remember one of my informants saying, 'We knew them a great deal too well to expect them to show any;' and they *were* grateful in their odd way.' Certainly no great distress of the kind ever passed over with so little disorder. The

only serious rioting, I think, was at Staleybridge, among a colony almost exclusively Irish. The 'hands,' therefore, as a whole, well deserved the good word which Lord Derby gave them. He had to take up his parable for them again in Parliament in the ensuing year, when he spoke on the Address in the House of Lords as to the distress, and the measures taken to relieve it. But his real work was done by his adhesion to the movement as incomparably the first man in the district, if not in wealth, yet in the combination of wealth, territorial connection, and personal distinction, and by the patient labour which he bestowed upon the actual business of the matter. It is not often, no doubt, that a politician in the interval of his political business has had such an opportunity. It is certain that no such opportunity has ever been better taken.

Lord Derby's purely literary work, or rather part of it, has been collected in two volumes, containing his translation of the Iliad, and several minor versions from a considerable number of languages, which he executed, for the most part, earlier. It is rather a pity, and more than rather surprising, that companion volumes have not been added to these, containing his Latin writings, which are excellent, and a selection at least from his speeches, reports, and other work in English prose. Fortunately, the characteristics of all his work, from the speech to the copy of verses, are sufficiently distinct, and sufficiently uniform. They are now, in the same measure, combination, and degree, very rare; and it is rather unlikely that they will for some time become common again. But he himself was little more than, perhaps, the most conspicuous and brilliant example of a combination which was produced almost inevitably by the old English training of public school, University, Parlia-

ment, and society. The range of his reading was, indeed, rather wider than was usual, even with the more cultivated men of his stamp; for his minor translations include subjects from French, German, and Italian, and in all three languages are treated with more than sufficient knowledge, if not with such obvious gusto as those from the Greek and Latin. In these latter, the well-known features of the older scholarship, which are sometimes praised and sometimes decried, are prominent. I do not know that either by praisers or decriers these features are always quite accurately recognised. They may be said to have comprised scholarship in the strict sense, very accurate as far as it went, if not exhaustive or venturesome in the philological direction, and a reading of the literatures which was both extensive and appreciative. In the present day, though there are, no doubt, bright exceptions, scholarship seems to be getting more and more divorced from literary appreciation and enjoyment, and literary appreciation and enjoyment from scholarship. In Lord Derby's time, and especially in Lord Derby's case, they went hand in hand. His Latin prose was perhaps, on the whole, superior to his verse—a rather unusual thing for an Eton man. His installation speech, in 1853, and the pretty welcome to the Princess of Wales ten years later, are the chief examples of this prose, and they are certainly excellent. His Chancellor's prize poem on Syracuse may strike some readers as a little *gradusish*, though it goes off trippingly enough. But the interest of his performances in scholarship, ancient and modern, lies rather in his versions from than in his attempts in languages, learned or unlearned, other than English. The attractions of translation in verse are so well known that there is little need to dwell on them.

Nobody, I suppose, who takes an interest in literature but has felt them at one time or another, though to some people the attraction is more than balanced by their sense of the hopelessness of the task. The simple fact is, that in verse you cannot translate, and I rather doubt whether you can in prose. You can, in very rare instances, recreate ; but that is a different thing : and you can sometimes produce a likeness afar off in the new and different materials. But the attempt to conquer these very difficulties is, no doubt, an additional attraction to those who do like translating.

Lord Derby's smaller translations are not extraordinary, but very first-rate ordinary, specimens of the kind. They are reasonably faithful to the letter of the originals ; they are remarkably faithful to the spirit ; they are decidedly above the average in faithfulness to the manner, as far as such faithfulness is possible. The best of all is, I think, the Englishing of Bishop Charles Wordsworth's exquisite epitaph on his first wife :—

I, nimium dilecta, Deus vocat ; i, bona nostræ
Pars animæ ; mærens altera, disce sequi.

Too dearly loved, thy God hath called thee ; go,
Go thou best portion of this widowed heart ;
And thou, poor remnant lingering here in woe,
So learn to follow as no more to part.

The objection to this is, of course, obvious. It lies in the much greater space occupied by the English lines and in the addition of certain *epitheta ornantia*. But it is very hard to reach the severity of Latin in this respect, and it can hardly be said that any of the additions are surplusage,

while the beauty of the second and fourth lines is undeniable, and the 'as no more to part' almost a positive improvement.

No translations, I think, please anyone who knows the original, and has not done them himself, so little as translations of Horace. I have never myself seen a single English translation of ode or epode that seemed to me to reproduce the true Horatian manner. You may, with Dryden, substitute magnificence for simple felicity. You may, with some more modern translators, substitute a niggling prettiness for the same inimitable quality. But Horace you do not get. I think that with Lord Derby you get as near as with anyone. His equivalent—a fourteener and a heroic—for the very curious metre of *Solvitur acris hiems* is, on the whole, a good equivalent, and the rendering of

> Jam te premet nox fabulæque manes,
> Round thee shall night and bodiless phantoms press,

is one of the happiest mixtures of closeness and effect I know, being itself a very fine English line. Nothing will do for *Quis multa gracilis* after Milton : and the ode to Thaliarchus, like all Alcaics, brings the unrivalled swing of that metre before the lover of the original too constantly to be satisfying. But the *Barine* Sapphics are very happily rendered, and the loss of the Alcaic rush is less felt in Lord Derby's version of *Æheu fugaces* than in most attempts at that famous complaint. *Donec gratus eram* was ordained as a Dark Tower, and all I can say is, that Lord Derby has come back across the heath considerably less damaged than Mr. Gladstone. The sole Catullian version, the 'Sirmio,' an impossible thing, is good in itself, but shows, what no one who knows will deny,

the inferiority in succinct elegance of English to Latin—perhaps the only inferiority of which we need complain. Landor, in his 'Rose Aylmer' and 'Dirce' vein, might render Catullus; no other modern Englishman could. On the other hand, and to come to the moderns, the Englishing of Millevoye's famous 'Chute des feuilles' is extraordinarily good. The eighteenth-century tone, which Lord Derby could take so well, and which he infused with a touch of nineteenth-century flavour, often reminding one of Scott's more formal verse, was exactly suitable to this masterpiece of the French 'middle' school, the Classic on its way to become Romantic. It is so good that I think it must be quoted :—

Thickly amid the groves were laid
The leafy spoils of autumn's gale ;
Each woody nook to light displayed,
And hushed the voiceless nightingale.

Ev'n in his dawn of life decaying
A youthful Poet sadly roved ;
Yet once again with faint steps straying
Amid the scenes his childhood loved.

Dear woods, farewell ! your mournful hue
Foretells the doom that waits on me,
And in each blighted leaf anew
I learn to read my death's decree.

Yes ! he the boding sage has said,
Perchance thine eye may see once more
The autumnal forests mellowing red,
Yet once again—and then 'tis o'er.

Round thy young front all dark and sere
Is twined e'en now the cypress wreath,
And paler than the paling year
Thou bendest towards the bed of death.

Ere yonder russet grass shall fade,
Ere droop upon yon vine-clad height
The last remains of lingering shade,
Thy youth shall feel the nipping blight.

And I must die! the chilling blast
Congeals me with its icy touch,
And e'er my spring of life is past
I feel my winter's near approach.

Fall, blighted foliage, chill and pale!
Hide from the sight this road of sorrow,
And from a mother's anguish veil
The spot where I must lie to-morrow!

But if to this sequestered brake
Kind pity lead one much-loved maid;
Sweetly her fairy step shall wake,
And soothe awhile my troubled shade!

He past—and never to return!—
The last leaf quivering in the glade
Fell on the youthful Poet's urn,
Beneath the oak his tomb was made.

But never to that lonely[1] stone
The Maiden came by pity led;
The passing Shepherd's step alone
Disturbed that still sepulchral bed.

Not only is this very pretty in its prim old-fashioned way, but if anybody compares it with the original, he will find it wonderfully close.

The same transition character in his style stood Lord Derby in good stead when he attempted Filicaia and Metastasio. The Filicaia sonnets are particularly good, nor is the Pindaric which renders Manzoni's 'Fifth of May' by any means contemptible. I like the German versions less, but

[1] It is printed 'lowly,' but must be 'lonely.' Millevoye wrote 'pierre *isolée*.'

it may be that this is because they are all from Schiller, whose weaknesses always show themselves in a translation. Besides Lord Derby had not enough of the Romantic—the literary Romantic—spirit in him to render German poetry, which owes its whole charm to the presence of that spirit. I think Mr. Kebbel is right when he compares the 'Ritter Toggenburg' version to Scott, though to my fancy it is Scott at his earliest and weakest, when he was being gently led by Monk Lewis in the paths of Romanticism. The superior excellence of the French and Italian versions seems to me to indicate distinctly the translator's literary position. It was somewhat older than his years, and had an eighteenth-century and classical character in it: but it had also something of the Romantic before Romanticism.

This consideration is very important for the larger work, the translation of the Iliad, of which, as has been said, Lord Derby published the first book privately and experimentally in 1862, and, this pilot balloon having been successful, the whole in 1864. We hear from Lord Malmesbury of his 'amusing himself with translating the Iliad' as early as 1853, in one of his fits of gout, and at a later period as 'very busy with his Iliad.' It had a great success at first: much more, I think, than, in the case of such a book, the mere circumstance of its being the work of an ex-Prime Minister would have given it, even with a people so fantastic in their book-buyings as the English. The author was able to thank the public and his critics in a fifth edition within seven months after the appearance of the first (in October 1864), in May 1865. Then the demand slackened, though he lived to issue, in 1867, yet another and more portable edition, with the smaller translations added to it. In later years it has, I think, been rather unjustly depreciated by

Homeric scholars. 'On Translating Homer' has, as Homer's second, if not his greatest, hero says of himself in a modern mouth, 'become a name.' It is a thing for discussion, for partisanship almost. We have in criticism Wilson's opinion on it, Mr. Arnold's, Mr. Lang's—to mention only considerable ones published at some distance of time. We have endless practical attempts on the great scale and the small. In such cases the vision of the wood may be not a little hindered by the trees; and each man's exploration of it is likely to be something more than a little hindered by his quest for particular trees.

What is it that we want in Homer? What do we desire to see reproduced in an English version of him? I think critics of the subject have sometimes manifested a certain disinclination to be pinned down to this question, and have rather willingly indulged in alarums and excursions on particular points which, save as contributing to a general view, have not much to do with the case.

There is in Homer, first of all, the story, which even the baldest translation will give us, and which can, perhaps, be given best, not by translation at all, but by such tales from Homer as Lamb's. Still, unless the translation is so disgustingly bad that it simply does not let itself be read, it can hardly fail to give this story, and it cannot, even if it is *la plus belle fille du monde* among translations, from this point of view, give any more. Secondly, there are the lights on manners, customs, and the like, together with the illustration of the temper of the early world. Here we get considerably higher. For a translation to render these, the translator must have a pretty considerable knowledge, not merely of the bare language, but of the literature of which the work forms part. It was here that Pope, whom sheer

literary talent carried safe through, to some extent, failed grievously, his almost entire ignorance of Greek and his scant knowledge of things Greek constantly weakening his version. Thirdly, there is the value of the language, the metre, the rhythm, and the like ; and at this stage we plunge at once from mere knee-deep water over head and ears. Hardly deeper is the fourth depth —that of making the new work a poem, if not of the same poetic force as the original, yet a poem. For in truth it is only a continuation of the third: and if anyone can swim easily in that, it will go hard but he will not find himself in danger of sinking in the other. It is this third degree over which there is all the difficulty and all the pother, and it will be found on examination that most of the faults with which Lord Derby's version is charged arise from an erroneous, or at least unreasonable, estimate of what has to be done in this direction and of the way of doing it. In other words, he has been asked to give not only something which he did not intend to give, but something which he was not bound to give.

As he himself observes in his preface, which is brief, modest, and critically very sound, the varieties of devices adopted to satisfy the third requirement (not that he formulates or regards it as such) have been almost innumerable. And I do not know that much can be said against his argument for blank verse. But I think it escaped him that the strongest part of that argument is, so to speak, negative. For myself, I used in green, unknowing youth to have an idea that the Spenserian stanza might do ; I have long given that up. I still think Chapman the best version we have, but that is for another reason presently to be noted. The fact is that the more constrained, though also more characteristic, metres, from the couplet to the Spenserian or

the 'pestilent heresy' of English hexameters, do not render and cannot render the effect which the Homeric hexameter gives to the reader of the Greek, but can and do render, to his ears jarringly and to the ears of others misleadingly, something which is not the effect of Homer. And the same is the case with archaisms or affectations of language, whether they be of the less extravagant style, as that of the ballad metre and dialect, or the more extravagant, such as is well known in some versions later in date than Lord Derby's. You never can reproduce of malice prepense and by mannerism an effect which was simply and naturally produced. If Chapman is still the best thing we have, and if, as I believe, Chaucer could have done it better than Chapman, and a French trouvère of the twelfth century best of all, it is partly, no doubt, because the spirit of these men and of their times was more akin to Homer's than ours. But it is partly also because their own style, language, and spirit have undergone since they wrote, though in a less degree, the very process of aging, of moving aloof, of which we feel the presence in Homer. No *pastiche* nowadays, whether in prose or in verse, can produce this effect; it can only produce a *pastiche* of it.

At the same time, doubtless, according to the taste of his own time, and still more of the times which have succeeded his, Lord Derby sacrificed much by adopting plain blank verse, and a simple though stately strain of literary English. It may be that he was right, and that our tastes are wrong. Few critics have, I think, noticed how thoroughly and hopelessly the mere appreciation of simplicity has gone out in England. We have become rather more sensitive to positive ugliness, to dull clumsy want of beauty, than our fathers were; but we have rushed into the belief that beauty

must be florid and brilliant or quaint and odd, that it cannot be classical and quiet. Lord Derby's style has very little ornament, and unluckily such ornament as he has is now an unfashionable—was never at any time a very good—kind. He draws near to, though he never reaches, the worst features of the poetic diction of the last century, the artificial lingo which Dryden seldom or never permitted himself, but which reigned supreme, save in a few eccentrics, between Dryden and Darwin. It is here that the real danger of his version lies, and I do not say that it altogether escapes that danger. But I think it would be well for those who despise it to remember, more clearly than they seem to do, that literary history is the merest Bluebeard's closet full of dead loves. Of course, we think our live love prettier. Will she seem so to those who open the closet a hundred years hence? I think she will—a little; but by no means to such an extent as some others appear to think.

Lord Derby's version, then, is written in blank verse, and in a slightly conventionalised literary English. It thus comes closest in general characteristics and circumstances to Cowper. If we made the comparison of the two, without reading a line, we should be prepared to find Cowper the better poet, and Lord Derby the better scholar. But even this will not settle offhand for us the question, Which is the nearer Homer? The old plan of actual citation may be best, and we may take one of the stock passages on which Wilson and others have descanted, prefixing the specimens from the chief earlier blank and couplet verse-translators, which Wilson gives, with the Greek original and a literal translation from the Greek in prose, and then giving Lord Derby's own. Nothing for this purpose can

be better than the famous nursery passage of the Sixth Book :

HOMER :

ὣς εἰπὼν οὖ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ.
ἂψ δ' ὁ πάϊς πρὸς κόλπον ἐϋζώνοιο τιθήνης
ἐκλίνθη ἰάχων, πατρὸς φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθείς,
ταρβήσας χαλκόν τε ἰδὲ λόφον ἱππιοχαίτην,
δεινὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας.
ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατήρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ.
αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς κόρυθ' εἵλετο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ,
καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ παμφανόωσαν·
αὐτὰρ ὅγ' ὃν φίλον υἱὸν ἐπεὶ κύσε πῆλέ τε χερσὶν,
εἶπεν ἐπευξάμενος Διΐ τ' ἄλλοισίν τε θεοῖσιν.

Which is, being interpreted with utmost literalness :

Thus saying bright Hector stretched out for his boy ; but the boy lay back shrieking on the breast of his well-girt nurse, frightened at the sight of his dear father, disturbed both by the brass and the plume of horse's mane, perceiving it nodding terribly from the topmost helmet. And both his dear father laughed out and his revered mother. Thereupon bright Hector took his helmet from his head, and it indeed he placed, all shining as it was, on the ground ; but his dear son he then kissed, and tossed him in his hands and spoke, praying to Zeus and the other Gods.

And here are the blank-verse or couplet versions (for Chapman is out of this particular running) of Hobbes (which Wilson does not give), Dryden, Pope, Cowper, Sotheby, and, lastly, Lord Derby :

HOBBES :

And when he thus had said his arms he spread
The child to take, who, terrified thereby,
And unacquainted with a glittering crest
And horse's mane that nodding at it hung,
Turned his face crying to the nurse's breast
And with his little arms close to her clung :

Which made his father and his mother smile.
Then Hector on the ground his helmet laid
And took the child and dandled him awhile,
And then to Jove and all the gods he prayed.

DRYDEN :

Then holding forth his arms he took his boy,
The pledge of love and other hope of Troy.
The fearful infant turn'd his head away
And on his nurse's neck reclining lay,
His unknown father shunning with affright
And looking back on so uncouth a sight,
Daunted to see a face with steel o'erspread
And his high plume that nodded o'er his head.
Then sire and mother smiled with silent joy,
And Hector hastened to relieve his boy :
Dismissed his burnished helm that shone afar—
The pride of warriors and the pomp of war—
The illustrious babe thus reconciled he took,
Hugged in his arms, and kissed, and thus he spoke.

POPE :

Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy,
Stretched his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy ;
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
And Hector hastened to relieve the child :
The glittering terrors from his brow unbound
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground,
Then kissed the child, and lifting high in air,
Thus to the gods preferred a father's prayer.

COWPER :

The hero ended and his arms put forth
To reach his boy ; but with a scream the child
Still closer to his mother's bosom clung,
Shunning his touch—for dreadful in his eyes
The brazen armour shone ; and dreadful more
The shaggy crest that swept his father's brow.

Both parents smiled delighted ; and the chief
Let down the crested terror on the ground,
Then kissed him, played away his infant fears,
And thus to Jove and all the powers above.

SOTHEBY :

He spoke, and stretched his arms, and onward prest
To clasp his child and fold him on his breast ;
The while the child on whose o'erdazzled sight
The helm's bright splendour flashed too fierce a light,
And the thick horsehair as it wavy played
From the high helmet cast its sweeping shade,
Scared at his father's sight bent back distressed
And shrieking sunk upon his nurse's breast.
The child's vain fear their bitter woe beguiled
And o'er the boy each parent sweetly smiled.
And Hector now the glittering helm unbraced
And gently on the ground its terror placed ;
Then kissed and dandling with his infant played,
And to the gods and Jove devoutly prayed.

LORD DERBY :

Thus as he spoke, great Hector stretched his arms
To take his child ; but back the infant shrank,
Crying and sought his nurse's sheltering breast,
Scared by the brazen helm and horsehair plume
That nodded fearful on the warrior's crest.
Laughed the fond parents both, and from his brow
Hector the casque removed, and set it down
All glittering on the ground ; then kissed his child,
And danced him in his arms, and thus to Jove
And to the Immortals all addressed his prayer.

These six translations may be said, without too great a stretch of accuracy, to represent the six half-centuries of English literature, between 1600 and 1900. Nor am I much afraid of any competent contradiction when I say that, if they be compared with each other, and with the original,

Lord Derby's is the only one that deserves the name of a translation at all, while it is at least the equal, poetically, of all but Dryden's. It may seem to some that Hobbes ought to be left out of question, but I have purposely cited him to show that the most grovelling abstinence from any attempt at poetical beauty is compatible with very great inadequacy in rendering. Dryden, as usual, is Dryden, even if he is not Homer. He had, we know, his own theory of translation, and expressly disclaimed literal fidelity. His omissions are pardonable, and his insertions are poetry ; but the thing is simply a free paraphrase, not a translation. And Mr. Pope? Mr. Pope, I own, here really shocks me. No reasonable person can question that the author of the finale of the 'Dunciad,' of the character of Atticus, of the lines on Lady Suffolk, was a poet—but if we only had this? To begin with, it is certain that the writer had neither the Greek nor any exact version from the Greek before him. He had simply Dryden. He follows Dryden where Dryden interpolates (cf. 'silent' and 'secret,' not merely additional, but false to the text, ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε, 'relieve the child,' and so forth). His amplifications, unlike Dryden's, are of the true schoolboy *gradus* kind (cf. '*fond* arms,' and '*lovely* boy'). He is terrible. Nor is Cowper much better. 'Mother,' for 'nurse,' is simply a gross blunder, and 'the crested terror' is an un-Homeric prettification. As for Mr. Sotheby, nothing more than this passage would be needed to justify the passing allusion of contempt on which Macaulay has left him impaled. Observe the clumsy babblement of the first eight lines, the idiocy of 'sweetly' smiled and 'gently' placed! In contrast with all these, Lord Derby's version, while not in the least tame, is simple, stately, and exact. It misses nothing of

the slightest importance, and it inserts nothing superfluous. The only questionable thing is 'sheltering,' for ἐϋζώνοιο, and even here it may fairly be contended that the Homeric epithet means '*amply* girt,' and suggests that the child hid his face in the folds. In other words, it is a translation of the Greek, and it is comely and sufficient English ; and what need mortals ask for more?

Further verbal comparison and criticism might not be very well in place here, but I think it will be admitted that Lord Derby holds his own very fairly, not merely in point of scholarship, but in point of poetry. In this last respect the main charge which he underlies is, of course, that of 'tameness.' Something has been said or hinted on this head already ; a little more may be added before concluding. Is it so very certain that the 'simple and pathetic' stuff of the Iliad, if we separate from it the charm of the magnificent language and metre in which it is couched, is not sometimes 'tame'? And if this is so, is it not the case that those translators of Homer who have managed, in some estimations at any rate, to disguise the tameness, have put on it, after the necessary stripping involved in the change of metre and language, clothing which is not Homer's at all? I own that I am rather inclined to this opinion, and that I am also rather inclined to think that Lord Derby's is the more excellent way. With him, at any rate, we have nothing that is *not* Homer, and we have everything of Homer's that is not ornament. I do not think myself that it is well to encourage people to think that they have the whole of Homer when they have not : and that is what most translations do. With a blank-verse version which is faithful, as this certainly is, there is no deception, and no possibility of mistake. If people want more, they should learn Greek.

If they will not learn Greek, they can at least be sure that they will not, as I have known some good people do, incur the risk of going into ecstasies over beauties, or what they think beauties, which are not in the original at all, and have simply been stuck on by the translator, to comply with the demand for beautification.

CHAPTER X

THIRD MINISTRY. THE SECOND REFORM ACT

Circumstances of Third Ministry -Changes in the Staffs of the two Parties—The Reform Bill of 1866—Debates in the House, and agitation out of it—Lord Dunkellin's Amendment—Resignation of the Russell Ministry—The Adullamites and others refuse to join Lord Derby—He takes office with his own party—Constitution of the Ministry—Hyde Park—The Tory Reform Bill and its fortune—Minor business—The policy of the Reform Bill considered.

THE penalty upon the Tracies for having participated in the murder of Becket is, according to a well-known West-country saying, that they are fated to have 'the wind in their faces.' I do not know whether it was the penalty of the double dealing at Bosworth (that surely must have been expiated by Earl James's fidelity and suffering in the rebellion), but certainly Lord Derby was fated to have the wind in his face whenever he took office. In no case, I think, did he show perfect seamanship in sailing against it, and in this last cruise he tried to run before it with more disastrous results than ever. To drop nautical metaphor, it is certainly a very curious thing (though somewhat less curious when it is reflected that Governments in a minority are naturally allowed only awkward berths) to consider the troubles which beset the three Conservative administrations of 1852, 1858, and 1867, both at home and

abroad. In '52 Lord Derby had had not merely the Protectionist difficulty, but the state of affairs arising from the *Coup d'état* in France to deal with. In '58-9 he had had not merely Reform, but the Italian trouble, the Indian Mutiny, and other things. He was now to have Reform again, the results of the quarrel between Austria and Prussia, the Jamaica business, and the Fenian troubles. And he had to meet all this with health weakened and almost broken down by disease and age.

The circumstances which led to his taking office on this occasion were none of his seeking or making. As has been said, Parliament was dissolved of necessity in the summer of 1865, and the Conservatives came back considerably weaker than before in rank and file. They were, however, relatively much stronger in officers than they had been, while their antagonists, who had long had the advantage of them in that point, were weaker. By a very curious coincidence, all the chiefs of the Peelites, except the ablest and the most insignificant, had been cleared off during Lord Palmerston's Government. Lord Aberdeen had died, and so had Sir James Graham, both in fulness of years. But Mr. Sidney Herbert (Lord Herbert of Lea) was almost a young man at his death; and he left none of his fellows behind except the great and still enigmatic force of Mr. Gladstone, and the curious insignificance of Mr. Cardwell, one of those respectable nonentities who often attain a strange prominence in English political life. After the change of all things, and the triumph of Mr. Gladstone, Guizot observed to Bishop Wilberforce that 'the men were dead and the party governed,' which was true enough : but for the present it was little more than a party of one leader and one or two followers. The ablest by far of the non-Peelite members of the

Palmerston administration, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, had also died early, and a very short time after the elections Lord Palmerston himself followed, full of years, after such an official career as few English Ministers have had, and while still enjoying such a popularity as probably no English Minister has ever equalled, or even approached. He was succeeded by Lord Russell, and the only other important change was the introduction as Foreign Minister of Lord Clarendon, a very Conservative Whig.

The temper of the new Parliament was little, if at all, more in favour of Reform than the temper of that which it had succeeded, and Lord Russell's age and experience were not likely to make him very rash. Consistency to his old schemes, however, may have inclined him to the side which Mr. Gladstone had now definitely taken, and a Reform Bill was introduced in March, 1866. It seems extremely probable that, if it had not been brought in, there would have been no demand for it, and that if it had been resisted in a different manner, it would have shared the fate of that of 1860. It has even been suggested that the Tories might not unwisely, nor even inconsistently with their own professions, have accepted it; for it was the merest compromise in character. The County franchise was to be lowered to a little above what the Borough franchise had been, and the Borough franchise to half the County franchise. The Redistribution Scheme was postponed, and the minor proposals were very unimportant. It might in ordinary circumstances have been dribbled out like the Bill of 1860, or have been dribbled in somehow, without anybody caring a jot. Mr. Gladstone, however, was determined that this should not be, and he used his great eloquence and power of appealing to popular audiences for the first 'stumping'

tour that an English statesman of his rank had ever made. I doubt, however, whether even this would have blown up such fire of popular excitement as did exist, exaggerated as that has been, but for the Homeric fights which soon began in the House itself. Now these fights could not have been got up—great as were the oratorical powers of Mr. Gladstone and of Mr. Bright, his chief of the staff—if it had not been for their antagonists, and the chief of these antagonists were not Conservatives proper. The Conservatives proper had, indeed, champions of their own, who were as different from the scratch crews gathered together to form and support the two earlier administrations as well might be. Independently of Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gathorne Hardy (who had defeated Mr. Gladstone at Oxford, and by the defeated person's own frank confession 'unmuzzled' him the year before), Sir Hugh Cairns, Lord Robert Cecil, to name no others, were the equals of the very best Liberal speakers at their best. But, though these and others did well and worshipfully during this curious contest, in which the whole principles of the suffrage as a right were fought out on a ground reminding the impartial onlooker of the process of waltzing on a dinner plate, it was not to them that the position of front-fighters fell. This was occupied by Mr. Lowe, an advanced Liberal, and by Mr. Horsman, a Parliamentary nondescript. I have sometimes amused myself by wondering whether in the New-Zealander period, one of the ingenious persons who have a fine eye for consequences will discover that Mr. Lowe was commissioned by Mr. Gladstone to do the fighting against him. It is as nearly certain as anything can be, that but for the heat developed in the friction between the 'Adullamites' on one side and Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright on the other, no sweeping

reform would have been carried at this or any near period. 'Observe too,' the clever person will say, 'the subsequent conduct of these Adullamites—clearly they were not serious.'

This, however, is, to a certain extent, out of the story here. After a display of debating, which, except in the House of Lords on the Irish Church Bill, has not been equalled since, the second reading was carried on April 28 by 5 only, while in Committee, after one or two feints, Lord Dunkellin (who most unfortunately did not live to succeed to his father's title and estates) carried an amendment by 11 that the seven-pound borough franchise, which the Bill introduced, should be rating, not rental. The class of critics who take seriously the jest of the greatest of all ironists on the length of Cleopatra's nose, has loved to indulge in sneers about the smallness of the issue on which such great consequences turned.

If the Government had ridden for a fall (which their moving spirit possibly did) they could not have accepted this result more joyfully. Lord Russell at once resigned, and Lord Derby perforce came in. It may be that he still entertained the inveterate delusion as to combinations which had made him believe that the Peelites were both patriots and Tories at heart: but he could have in any case hardly avoided inviting those who had done the work to share the responsibilities incurred. Mr. Lowe and Lord Grosvenor, who had been, the one the engine, the other the figure-head, of the Liberal Opposition, were invited to join, and both refused. Others—Lord Lansdowne, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Clarendon—were also approached. Lord Lansdowne, who, though not an old man, had a very high reputation, was prevented by sudden death from joining. If Lord Shaftesbury was asked, it must have been in pursuance

of that ill-fated mistake as to the temper and value of Churchmen which wrecked his coming administration and helped to wreck that of 1874. As for Lord Clarendon, there can be little doubt about the reasons of his refusal, if we attach exact credence to an extraordinary deliverance of his given by Bishop Wilberforce, which accuses Lord Derby of want of 'generosity,' of 'hating' Disraeli, but 'believing in him as he would in an unscrupulous trainer,' and so forth. But this deliverance is so out of accordance with facts; it shows such lack of intimate knowledge as to the actual relations of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli to the Reform Bill, that one is very loth to accept it, save on better security than that of one who was a great churchman, a great speaker, and a lovable man, but politically as unstable as water, and devoured by ambition. It is more probable that Lord Clarendon's refusal came from the knowledge of the fact mentioned by Lord Malmesbury, that the Conservative irresponsibles were at this very moment preparing an attack on his foreign policy. It appears that the Adullamites would have been willing to join a Government under Lord Stanley. But it is pretty certain that Lord Stanley could not have carried on any Government for six months, because the higher Tories would undoubtedly have broken with him.

The Ministry was actually formed from the Tory party alone, and it was a strong one. The new blood, as compared with that of '59, included Mr. Gathorne Hardy and Lord Cranborne, two of the strongest debaters in the House of Commons, and men of great administrative ability; Lord Carnarvon, who, with some unfortunate weaknesses, and in particular an absolute inability to screw himself to any sticking place, had character, accomplishments, and even

to some extent intellect, far superior to those of the average Cabinet Minister ; and Sir Stafford Northcote, who in some respects resembled Lord Carnarvon, and had had the disadvantage of being brought up in a doubtful school, but who had acquired in that school considerable financial aptitude, could speak well, was untiring in business, and in most respects was a model type of an English gentleman. Lord Malmesbury, whose health had been declining, handed over the Foreign Office to Lord Stanley, and took the merely consultative office of Privy Seal. The weakest point of the Cabinet was Mr. Walpole, who returned to the Home Office, which he had before held respectably, having been put to no trial. That office suddenly became, and has with rare intervals for a long time remained, one of the most important and difficult places in the Government, and Mr. Walpole broke down in it as few men have broken down before or since. He was much respected but well known, and if some of the agitators who knew him calculated on his failing at the pinch, they showed very considerable political ingenuity.

The Government had not had time to settle in their seats before they were warned that Abyssinia and Jamaica, the Continental war and Ireland, the commercial crisis and the rest, were nothing to what was imminent at home in England and in London. The fiery debates in the House of Commons, and perhaps some imprudent things said there by persons who, when the time came for standing to them, were not willing to take office, would have given a less consummate popular general than Mr. Gladstone, in a less ticklish state of things than that of England, opportunities for getting up agitation to any desired extent. There was running and riding everywhere, and the agitation culmi-

nated in the last week of July, when the egregious Mr. Edmond Beales earned himself a place in the story by pulling or getting pulled down Hyde Park railings (which, by the way, were excessively old, weak, and ugly). Then was the time for a strong Home Secretary to show himself strong. Mr. Walpole showed his strength by weeping in the presence of Mr. Beales and other respectable persons who came as a deputation to him. We are fond of believing that, whatever ridicule may do in France, it does not do much in England. My memory, and such study of politics as I have been able to make since, agree in persuading me that this untoward event settled beforehand the doom of the Derby and Disraeli Governments. Their material, which was really very good and strong, became contemptible from this conduct of Mr. Walpole: their *morale* was pronounced as worthless when it appeared that they had been bullied by a few London roughs into shooting Niagara.

The turns, however, before that particular turn was reached were many and curious. Foreign affairs, though the *Alabama* claims were imminent, gave somewhat less trouble than was anticipated. There was no question whatever of England taking part in the quarrel between Austria and Prussia, in which, though most Englishmen sympathised with Austria, their sympathy was considerably lessened by the part which the Empire had taken three years before in the attack on Denmark. After the events of the spring, nothing was of course expected from the Government in the way of Reform proposals till the following session, and the latter half of the year, except for the continuous agitation, went off quietly enough. The nuisance of processions as a means of intimidation was now, if not for the first time,

yet for the first time as a regular and tolerated thing, added to the other nuisances of English politics.

The exact sequence, and still more the exact causality, of events between the beginning of January 1867 and the end of February, when the Conservative Cabinet was quitted by Lord Cranborne, Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel, who could not agree to the scheme adopting household suffrage, is exceedingly obscure and contested, though very confident accounts have been given of it by outsiders. The only two authoritative statements, so far as I know, are Lord Derby's official one in the House of Lords, and Lord Malmesbury's in his Memoirs. The former, like most official accounts, *glisse et n'appuie pas*; and the latter is not wholly intelligible owing to the fact that the dangerous illness of Lady Malmesbury called her husband away from London at the very nick of time, so that he was not present at any of the 'distracted councils,' as Lord John Manners very frankly called them in a letter to him. The enemy, getting hold of a rather maladroit communication of Sir John Pakington's to his constituents at Droitwich, when he went down for re-election after the changes necessitated by the resignation of the three Ministers, elaborated a story about what was variously nicknamed 'The Six Hours' Bill' and the 'Ten Minutes' Bill,' the point being, as far as there was any point, that Ministers had two bills, a thoroughgoing and a less thorough one, ready, and substituted one for the other as things happened to look. The truth, as far as it can be made out from both printed and unprinted sources, seems to be that the phrase of 'distracted councils,' for which we have very much to thank the Duke of Rutland, sums up the whole thing. The Cabinet were not in the least unanimous, and most of them

were quite in the dark as to the intentions of their leaders, and not even quite sure individually how far each was himself prepared to go. Hence there were practically four stages of the affair. First of all, certain Reform resolutions were, on the precedent of the India Bill some ten years before, laid on the table in hopes that light might be got on the subject. These being in themselves obscure, and made somewhat obscurer by Mr. Disraeli's manner of introducing them, a regular bill of the familiar 'pottering' type was substituted, with divers fancy franchises and a Six and Twenty-pound rating qualification in boroughs and counties respectively. This was very coldly received by all parties. Meanwhile, and moreover, General Peel, who had at first declined to support it, being joined by Lord Cranborne and Lord Carnarvon, the question was next put to a meeting of the party at the Carlton three days after the split in the Cabinet. Here, though no resolution passed, a general disposition was shown (so the Duke of Rutland wrote to Lord Malmesbury) to prefer simple rated household suffrage to the Six-and-Twenty compromise. And finally, on March 18, after the reconstruction of the Government with the Three out, a bill was brought in upon this broad bottom, but still encumbered with all manner of minor restrictions, such as the exclusion of the 'compound householders,' those whose rates were paid in a lump for them by their landlords. This, with divers retained fancy franchises, dual voting, two years' residence, and so forth, all went—including even a restriction which oddly enough was proposed by Mr. Gladstone himself, and which would have relieved very poor ratepayers at once of their rates and their votes. This last was defeated by a sort of minor Liberal cave called the 'tea-room party.'

In this singular fashion [1] was Household Suffrage carried in England—a thing which at the beginning of the session probably not one man in a thousand would have thought possible, nor one in ten thousand desirable. The measure was not seriously opposed in the House of Lords, though an important amendment was introduced in it there, by allowing each voter only two votes in the three-cornered constituencies. It was on August 6, 1867, that Lord Derby, speaking to the question of the third reading in the House of Lords, described the Bill, whether as an original phrase or borrowing it from Lord Cranborne has been disputed, as a 'leap in the dark.' The leap was taken.

It will be better, before discussing these extraordinary events, to give a brief account of what happened between them and Lord Derby's third and final resignation of office—not this time because his enemies drove him out of it, but because his health was unequal to the task it imposed. One or two things must also be mentioned which happened during the course of the Reform Bill itself. Lord Derby's principal appearance after the speech just referred to, though there was an autumn session in consequence of the Abyssinian trouble, was at a great meeting at Manchester, where he explained and defended

[1] It is necessary, perhaps, explicitly to caution readers that the above account of an extremely obscure transaction is what classical and other scholars call a 'critical text' when they are responsible for or in agreement with it, and a 'made-up text' when they do not like it. That is to say, it is not, I think, identical in detail with any one previously printed account, and, as a consequence, may or must contain discrepancies with any one. It is what seems to me most probable on comparison of them all, and of things which I have heard, and most explanatory of the undoubted facts.

the Bill. But he was also called upon to act in a rather difficult matter, the agitation for the pardon of the Fenians who had murdered Police Sergeant Brett at the same town. The passages about the Reform Bill had given the idea that anything could be got by agitation, and a motley crowd of persons of distinction or notoriety pleaded for the pardon of the armed offenders who had killed a defenceless man in the execution of his duty for the purpose of freeing other criminals. Threats of assassination were sent to Lord Derby, to Lord Naas, the Irish Secretary, and to Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who had succeeded Mr. Walpole at the Home Office. Lord Naas was, indeed, doomed to assassination ; but long afterwards, and by less cowardly hands. It would probably have been impossible for the agitators, threatening or beseeching, to have hit upon two persons more proof against both bullying and sophistry than the Premier and the Home Secretary. The former not only stood firm, but denounced these dastardly outrages in one of his best speeches, and the rope got its own. This act was one of the last of Lord Derby's ministerial career. His gout had become worse and worse, and during January and February 1868 he was prevented from attending to any business by an attack so severe that, about the middle of the latter month, it threatened his life. He recovered, but thought it useless to attempt further work as leader, and resigned on the 24th. It had not been quite certain in the party whether his son or Mr. Disraeli would succeed him, but the Queen's choice fell on the latter. The changes in the Government were few, Mr. Ward Hunt taking Mr. Disraeli's place, and Lord Chelmsford being, as he thought, roughly elbowed out to make room for Lord Cairns as

Chancellor. It was in a way a stronger Government than ever, and it still had Lord Derby to speak for it in the Lords when he was well enough, and to give it advice; but it was no longer Lord Derby's Government. His forty years of active participation, subordinate or supreme, in office or in opposition, during which he had entirely reconstructed one of the two great parties, and had been thrice Prime Minister of England, were over before the arrangements necessitated by the enormous change which he had brought about during his last tenure were complete.

What was his exact attitude to that change, and what judgment ought to be passed on the attitude from the standpoint of this book?

The answer to the first of these questions will of course depend mainly, if not wholly, on the conclusions drawn from a great number of rather uncertain indications. There is no doubt that the general opinion both at the time and since inclined towards, if it did not exactly adopt in its full violence and unfairness, the opinion assigned to Lord Clarendon by Bishop Wilberforce, and already referred to. That is to say, people in general thought that Mr. Disraeli, having himself no principles in the matter, and finding the perpetual repetition of mere tinkering Reform Bills ineffectual and wearisome, resolved to turn his enemies' flank by a bold march; and that Lord Derby, playing only to win, and indifferent to consistency, was ready enough to let his lieutenant have his way, and so (to adopt a famous expression which helped as much as anything else to create, or at least to confirm, the notion) to 'dish the Whigs.'

Very good authorities have always been, and I believe most good authorities now are, of opinion that this view is quite mistaken; that, though Mr. Disraeli may have had no

particular objections to a lower franchise than any which had recently been proposed, he was not the author or chief supporter of the actual measure, and that the initial as well as the final responsibility rests with Lord Derby. This has been positively asserted by some persons who have at least a claim to know within the last few years. Even earlier, attention had been drawn to a phrase of Mr. Bright's—a rather well-informed person about subjects in which he took an interest, and by no means averse to gossip—that the Bill as it finally appeared was 'Lord Derby's Bill.' That Mr. Disraeli did afterwards take credit for 'educating the party' is nothing to the purpose, and indeed it was true enough, for he had done most of the practical education. But it would have been more in his nature to stick to the ingenuity of fancy franchises and the like ; nor was rashness by any means one of his chief characteristics. Now, friends as well as foes have always admitted that rashness of a certain kind *was* a characteristic of Lord Derby's. He was not rash—he was even rather unnecessarily cautious and timid—in assuming responsibilities or beginning operations ; but he was apt to acquire rashness as he went on. The same peculiarity which made him so singularly indiscreet in speech when he was once on his legs, though we hear constantly of his nervousness and hesitation before speaking and at the beginning of his speeches, made him strike out the more boldly the deeper he got into the water. There was to the last a great deal of boyishness in Lord Derby : and this boyishness took, among other forms, the form of being ready to act in a sort of 'here goes' and 'in for a penny in for a pound' spirit. It is also fair to remember that he had had, putting aside his first lessons (of which more in a moment), considerable experience of this Reform

question. He had seen partial attempts at it wreck Governments after Government. His practical shrewdness—a quality with which he is, I think, as a rule insufficiently credited—probably told him that the five years' respite he had procured by his compact with Palmerston was not a thing that could be repeated; and I do not know that it would be discreditable to his memory if we believed that, in addition to a genuine wish to get the question done with and out of the way, a little of the *après moi le déluge* feeling entered into his motives. It would not be discreditable, I say, for we must always remember that to Reform as such Lord Derby had never had any objection. He had spoken for it, as we have seen, when even the Whigs were, as a whole, rather lukewarm about it. He had done more than any single man in fighting the Bills of 1831 and 1832 through, and little as he liked some, if not most, of the results, I dare say there remained in him to the last, as there often will in such cases, a certain reluctance to admit that these very consequences were wholly and directly due to the extension of the suffrage. The drawback of borrowing Coriolanus is, as the Volscians found, that he remembers his Roman origin at inconvenient moments, and not at all to the advantage of his new followers and allies. Although no one had more of the Tory spirit in some ways than Lord Derby, he was not a Tory born, he was not a Tory bred, and he had (as I have pointed out, perhaps out of season, as well as in season), not merely no coherent or complete Tory theory of politics, but no coherent or complete theory of politics at all.

We may, therefore, I think, take it that the Household Suffrage Reform Bill was mainly his doing, and we may allow that he had divers reasons and excuses for his action;

but was that action defensible in itself? I own that I do not think it was, though I may be in an extremely small minority in thinking so. Whether the consequences have been good or bad is a question which it would of course be absurd to argue out here. Some people may like them, and some people may dislike them; but that is not the question. Nor is it any more the question whether the franchise is a right or a trust, whether small or large electorates are the best, or anything else of the kind. The question is whether it was, and is, the business of a Conservative leader and a Conservative party to carry out a policy which, for better or for worse, is the reverse of Conservative. We may, perhaps, without impertinence decline to enquire what is that 'true Conservatism,' that 'wise alteration which is consistent with the maintenance of,' &c., &c.? All that is very good on the platform and after dinner, but it may be put away with the flags and the banners, the trestles and the specially damasked table-napkins. Such a revolution as Catholic Emancipation, as the Repeal of the Corn Laws, as either of the three Reform Bills which have become law, can never be carried or carried out by a Tory party without inconsistency. They may cease active resistance to it, seeing it to be inevitable. There is not the slightest impropriety or inconsistency in their loyally accepting it, when it is accomplished, as the law of the land. But the proposing and the carrying of it of their own accord is, and, whatever may be said on the other side, always will be, a temporary putting of principle in the pocket, if not a temporary denial of principle.

There are three excuses usually alleged for the act. The first is, in one form or another, the Duke's old plea about the necessity of carrying on the Queen's Govern-

ment. In his mouth this was undoubtedly sincere, and in the very peculiar circumstances in which he was placed there may have been not only sincerity in it, but more real cogency than, for instance, Mr. Disraeli, in a well-known page of the 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' thought fit to allow. Not only was the Duke's conception of office, and to some extent his actual position in office, rather executive and administrative than legislative or deliberative ; but, in the political conditions of the time during which he served, there *was* a certain fear of the Queen's Government not being carried on if statesmen clung too uncompromisingly to their own opinions. There was still a very limited choice of possible persons as Ministers ; there was, much more than there has later been, a tendency in the country not to incline very decidedly to one party or the other, and there was consequently a danger, which not seldom became a real inconvenience, of a succession of feeble Governments, which practically could not govern at all. But those circumstances have long ceased, and though they may arise again, it will be time to adjust practice to them when they do arise. At the present moment the persons whose business it is to carry on the Queen's Government, and who are always quite willing to carry it on, are the persons who have the latest majority in Parliament, and their business may be left to them.

The second reason alleged is that the Tory party can carry out great changes in constitutional theory or administrative practice with better attention to the safeguards required than the other party. Of all political pleas, that, as Machiavelli says, in observing much modern politics and reading more ancient, a man shall acquaint himself with, this seems to me the most hollow. In the first place, nine

times out of ten, and always when the matter is one of much importance, the safeguards disappear altogether. This very Reform Bill of 1867 was, even after it took the 'leap,' surrounded with all sorts of safeguards, every one of which had to be thrown away. In the other cases, when the Tory Government is strong enough to impose its safeguards, does anyone suppose that they ever will last—can anyone say that they ever have lasted—one day beyond the time when the other party comes into power with the will and the opportunity to break them down? The contrary fact is demonstrable in the past, and certain in the future.

A third reason is a certain combination of hope of gratitude from the persons who benefit by the change, and fear of resentment from them if the change is too long and too fiercely resisted. It is thought that it is dangerous to let the others have the credit of the *largesse*; more dangerous to run the risk of appearing positively to refuse that *largesse*. As before, this seems to show not merely an extraordinary blindness to the teaching of history, but also a very odd misapprehension, partly complimentary, partly uncomplimentary, of the character of the English people. History and observation both tell us that that people is scarcely at all grateful and still less vindictive. Its gratitude is for favours to come; its vindictiveness is only shown in occasional and rather unintelligible outbursts. Gratitude for the Bill of 1867 did not prevent the new electorate from putting their benefactors in a hopeless minority on the very first occasion. Vindictiveness did not prevent the new electorate under the Bill of 1832 from giving the Tories the virtual government of England a very few years after they had fought the question of Reform to the very last ditch. What gratitude have the

Roman Catholics, at least of Ireland, ever shown in the course of sixty years and more for Emancipation? The truth is that, in matters carried on on so large a scale as this, gratitude and vindictiveness cannot exist. Individuals and small classes or communities may show them; not so nations.

There is another consideration, also a very simple one, as to the unwisdom of bidding for popular favour, which is that the Tory is hopelessly certain to be outbid by the Radical, and that the thirty or forty millions, whether they be mostly fools or not, are not fools enough not to see this, or not to know that it is to the Radical that they really owe such bids as the Tory makes.

It remains to apply these general considerations to the particular case before us. Lord Derby came into office on the upsetting of the Russell Reform Bill by Lord Dunkellin's amendment. If that amendment meant anything, it meant that the people of England by a just elected assembly of their representatives were so little set on Reform of any kind that difference on the smallest detail was enough to upset the proposal of one. If it meant nothing except that the party of Reform were so divided among themselves that they could not agree together on any scheme, nothing clearly could be more likely to unite them than the removal of the point of quarrel by the action of their political enemies. It was quite right that Lord Derby should sound the Adullamites on the question whether they would join him. Had they done so his course was perfectly clear. He could have come in, have pointed out that Reform on the great scale was evidently not wanted, have attended to corrections of the representation on the small, and with a compact majority at his back have governed England or

handed on the government to others 'a little better than he received it,' according to the great old rule. Chartism was practically dead ; and we know, from what has since occurred, that he would certainly have been backed up in refusing to be dictated to by Irish malcontents. But when the Adullamites would not join him, he was once more confronted with the problem, whether it was possible to govern England with a minority of England's representatives at his back. He had tried it twice and failed ; he had refused the trial with better chances twice, if not thrice, and certainly had not succeeded. I think that his case for refusal here was as clear as his case for refusal in 1851 and 1855 was not clear. There was no question of the 'Queen's Government' ; that was safe enough. There could be no aspersion on his patriotism for refusing to undertake a charge when those who had the control declined to supply him with the means of satisfactorily discharging it. Had he refused, there can be very little doubt that Mr. Gladstone, or Lord Russell, or anyone else who tried, would have broken down hopelessly, and the Tories would have come in with the ball at their feet. As they did come in, it was on their feet, not at them.

And what was the certain result of the course which he actually pursued? That inevitably, and in the natural course of things, he actually rolled out of the way of his successors on the other side the difficulty which had already once overthrown them. Who can fairly blame the Whigs for rallying round Mr. Gladstone when the Reform matter was settled? I cannot. When Mrs. Lowe told Lord Malmesbury that it would be 'ratting' for her husband to join Lord Derby, though it had not been ratting

for him to turn out Lord Russell, let us trust that it was the logic of someone who had not, instead of someone who had, worked through Aldrich a good many times. But if I, being of A's party on all points but one, and differing with B on all points but that one, find that B, coming round to A, carries the very alterations against which I had stood out, am I not entitled to rejoin A, and with him carry out the rest of the programme against B? Most certainly. Mr. Gladstone, with that keen eye for that *qui nous divise le moins* which has always characterised him, availed himself of the opportunity to put forward a matter on which for more than a generation all Radicals, and most Whigs, had been agreed. Thirty-three years earlier, in a very different stage of politics, Mr. Stanley had been able to carry with him but a very small fraction of the old Whig party in objecting to proceedings the logical outcome of which was Irish Disestablishment and Disendowment. Since that time there had been added to the weight in the one scale, and subtracted from that in the other, a large section of the High Church party, which, as far as it existed, would at the earlier date have gone solid for the Irish Establishment. In the same way, forces which could easily have been united for the opening of the governing bodies of the Universities to Dissenters, for the abolition of Purchase in the army, for the beginning of troubles in the shape of the first Irish Land Act, were kept aloof from each other by the not more important, but more differentiating, question of Reform. It so happens that recent events have supplied a most valuable parallel instance for help in judging this question. Suppose that when Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill failed Lord Salisbury, having taken the matter up, had decided that it was time to finish with Home Rule, that it could be carried out

by Conservatives with less danger to the Constitution than by Liberals, and all the rest of the usual cant. Is it not self-evident that the Liberal-Unionists, like the Adullamites of twenty years earlier, would have felt that the Tories had liberated their souls for them, that there was now no reason why they should not return to their Gladstonian allegiance, and work out the programmes, authorised or unauthorised, which the whole Gladstonian party had dallied with before? The thing is not matter of guesswork, it is matter of all but certainty.

Consider, on the other hand, what would have happened if Lord Derby had stuck to his colours, and, on finding that the Adullamites would not join him, had told Her Majesty that he could not undertake the Government. Nothing worse, from the Tory point of view, could possibly have happened than what did happen—that I cannot conceive anyone denying. The most triumphant Liberal administration that can be imagined could not in five or six years have done more than introduce Household Suffrage, destroy the Irish Church, more than half sever the union between the English Church and the Universities, revolutionise the army, allow Russia to tear up the Treaty of Paris, lay the foundation of interference with free contract in Irish land, and the rest of it. Observe that these may be all excellent things in themselves. I speak of what they were from the Tory point of view. Nothing worse, I say, could from that point of view have happened. Yet the very least of these would, putting the difference of the constituencies entirely out of question (though this is, in the language which Lord Derby himself loved, 'giving lumps of weight away'), have been sufficient to divide hopelessly such a party as the Whig-Liberal party was before it was united by finding itself

in the same 'dish.' Anyone who has considered with understanding the history of 1832–1866 may be challenged to assert that there was more than the faintest chance of any one of them getting through while the Whigs were still a party in the State, and the Conservatives still played their own game. And if, attempting to take the challenge up on another issue, such a one should say that it was impossible that so large a portion of the nation should have continued unrepresented, that the demand for Reform would have become imperative, and so forth, his challenger is not limited to the answer that he doubts this very much. As it happens, that does not matter. Let us suppose that the voice of the nation had forced Household Suffrage on the Liberal party. In that case, nothing worse could have happened, from the Tory point of view, than what did happen. But the Tory honour would have been unsmirched; but the Tories would not have had themselves to blame for what followed; but (lastly and most forcibly of all) the cement, the only possible cement, would not have been supplied for the heterogeneous Whig-Liberal party, nor the stimulant, nor the excuse that they had been 'dished' once, and would take care not to be dished again.

I can only conceive one resource left to the Tory democrat and the Tory official arguer. 'Yes; but how about 1874?' 'Was not 1874 the deferred pay for 1867?' Here we get into matters which are too much matters of opinion for positive speaking. I can only say that, so far as I can read political history, it certainly was not. It was simply the reaction from the Reforming debauch of 1868–1873, and would have followed on such a debauch in any case, no matter who had been guilty of it or who had been in power. Besides, if we are to go into the infinite azure of the future in this

way, argument becomes impossible. 1880 must be taken into consideration, and, most of all, 1885. It is convenient for political argument that it should be, to some extent, circumscribed, and without any undue circumscription I think it can be proved that no advantage accrued to Tory interests, and much disadvantage to Tory honour, from the Reform Bill of 1867.

CHAPTER XI

RETIREMENT AND DEATH

Lord Derby resigns in consequence of ill-health—His position as retired Leader—His speeches on the Irish Church Question—Last illness and death—Personal characteristics.

Lord Derby resigned office on February 24, 1868. He died on October 23, 1869; but, though this period of not quite two years was full of pain and disease, it was by no means an idle period with him. Some of his finest speeches were made during it on that great question of the Irish Church with which he had been identified all through his political life, and as to which his attitude had throughout been logically consistent, though the consistency did not extend to his action in other matters. As the ill health which necessitated his resignation made it also impossible for him to lead the House of Lords, his position was, to a certain extent, anomalous. He was still looked up to as the real head of the party by its soundest members, and it was impossible that he should not have a consultative voice; but such a voice, in such circumstances, is a rather awkward thing. Whether any friction actually arose I do not know: it seems to be implied in a passage of that book full of indiscretions, Bishop Wilberforce's *Life*, where the present Lord Derby is represented as saying, 'My father cannot be convinced that he is

now a mere private.' The Bishop's indignation against the Tory party for not having made him Archbishop of Canterbury, or at least Bishop of London, was just then at white-heat. He was ready to give up the Irish Church and throw in his lot with Mr. Gladstone, as he did, duly receiving his reward. And he was never a very trustworthy reporter. It is excessively unlikely, putting sentimental considerations out of the question, that so shrewd a man as the fifteenth Earl of Derby should have made so silly a remark. A field-marshal may have to resign his command as far as active service goes, but he does not become a 'mere private' for that.

During the year 1868 the leadership of the Lords devolved upon Lord Malmesbury, who, however, gave it up when the Government resigned, and it fell to Lord Cairns, Lord Salisbury refusing it. At the time of this latter change, Lord Derby wrote a letter to the outgoing leader which shows pretty clearly that he did not consider himself a 'private,' and was not so considered by others. His speech on Church-rates during the earlier session was, although not violent, a clear statement of those principles of Toryism to which, as far as the Church was concerned, he was always true, though he held them more loosely in regard to other matters. When the attack on the Irish Church began he was at once in the thick of the fight, and there was all his old vigour in the demonstration that the method adopted by Mr. Gladstone was unconstitutional. It is probable, though not certain, that, if he had still been Prime Minister, a less uncertain sound of opposition would have been given in the Commons than the amendment which his son moved, and which was in effect a sort of confession and avoidance. But the mistakes which he, and still more Mr. Disraeli, had

made were coming home to roost, and there was no means of driving them off again. In the debates of both years Lord Derby, as has been said, took a great part. In 1868 the Lords threw out the Bill which Mr. Gladstone founded on his resolutions by 89, and though Lord Derby's chief argument was the weak one that a Parliament ought to be summoned expressly to deal with the question, the speech was strong. But it was when, the special Parliament having been called, and having furnished Mr. Gladstone with an immense majority, the Bill was once more introduced, and once more made its way up to the Lords, that the last and almost the greatest of his speeches was made. It contained one of those prophecies of the approach of the conclusion of his own career, which with some statesmen are a mere set-off to debate, to be introduced at convenience and for effect. In Lord Derby, the least gushing of men, broken down moreover with ill health, and, as Lord Malmesbury says, 'looking pale and ill, speaking with feeble voice, without his usual energy, and with symptoms altogether painful to those who loved him,' the effect must have been extraordinary. The finest passage is a famous one, and, like many of the finest passages of oratory, rests mainly on a happy quotation and application. Lord Derby, like all good men, was a devotee of Sir Walter Scott, and it was from 'Guy Mannering' that he drew the address of Meg Merrilies to the Laird of Ellangowan.

My Lords, I may venture upon an illustration of a very simple kind with which all your Lordships are probably acquainted, and which none of your Lordships can have heard without having been touched by its simple pathos. The language represents the feelings of a poor gipsy, when she and her tribe were driven out from the homes in which they had for

many years found a shelter—driven out by a man to whom they had long looked for protection—a protection which they had repaid by the most affectionate devotion. The noble Duke [of Argyll] opposite will pardon me if I fail in giving the right accent. 'Ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan; ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram. This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths; see if the fire in your ain parlour burn blither for that. Ye have riven the thack of seven cottar houses: look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster . . . There's thirty hearts there that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted suckets, and spent their life blood ere ye had scratched your finger.'

My Lords, it is with sentiments like these—with sorrow, but with resentment—that the Protestants of Ireland may look upon you from whom they expected protection—a protection which they repaid with the most faithful loyalty, when they now find you laying upon them the heavy hand of what I must consider an undeserved oppression. They may say 'Go your ways, Ministers of England, ye have this day, as far as in you lay, quenched the light of spiritual truth in fifteen hundred parishes. See if your own Church stand the faster for that.' There are not seven nor thirty, but 700,000 hearts, and 700,000 more who have connected themselves with you in loyal attachment to the sovereign for the sake of that Protestant religion you both profess, who, in defence of that union which you induced them to form, would have shed their dearest life blood. Remember who these men are. These are the men whom you invited to settle on the soil of Ireland for the establishment and support of the Protestant religion. These are the men who, at the time of the sorest trial of the Crown of England, came forward to support William the Deliverer, and who, at the battle of Boyne, vindicated the freedom of Ireland and the rights of the Protestant religion. These are the men who, invited by you to settle in Ireland, converted Ulster from a barren waste into a thriving province; and who, by their energy, their industry, and their steady conduct, have made the province of Ulster not merely the 'garden of Ireland,' but the most gratifying and wonderful contrast to those parts of Ireland in which the Protestant religion does not prevail. Was it, my Lords, at their own desire that

they abandoned their independence and constituted themselves a portion of the Empire? No, my Lords; it was at the earnest solicitation of England, when they had the game in their own hands, and could have done as they pleased. They consented to be associated with you. And what was the offer you made them? It was this, that if they consented to relinquish their independence, they would be associated with this great Empire, and above all that their Church should be firmly established and placed by their Union with you upon a basis from which nothing could remove it.

In the final struggle of amendments, when Lord Cairns at last agreed to a compromise on the subject of postponing the application of the Church surplus, Lord Derby, we are told, was very angry, though it probably mattered little. Earlier in the session he had, with Lord Cairns, supported the Life Peerages Bill. Here, however, for once Lord Malmesbury was indocile, fought the Bill at every stage, and at last threw it out, 'conquering both my leaders,' as he remarks, with characteristic freedom from personal bumptiousness.

Lord Derby was to survive the Church which he had so often defended but a few weeks. He went back to Knowsley and fell ill there for the last time. Here are Lord Malmesbury's successive entries :—

September [*this is a clerical error for October*] 14*th*. The accounts of Lord Derby are bad, and I am very unhappy. I got a sad letter from Freddy Stanley, but he does not seem to have given up all hope.

16*th*. Left Heron Court for London. I called to enquire for Lord Derby. The account was very bad. I saw Colonel Talbot, his son-in-law, who says there is no hope.

17*th*. The news of Lord Derby is much the same. He is gradually sinking.

18*th*. Lady Malmesbury got a very pretty letter from Lord

Stanley, full of affection for his father and mother, and of kindness to us ; but he gives very little hope. There is a report that the Liverpool doctor, not calculating on his weakness, gave him a dose of opium equal to what he was accustomed to prescribe for him when in comparative health, and that it produced a state of collapse from which he never rallied.

21*st.* Lord Derby still lives, but gets weaker every day. He is quite unconscious, and has taken no nourishment for several days.

23*rd.* Lord Derby died this morning at seven o'clock. In him I lose my greatest friend, and the country a most brilliant and accomplished statesman.

He was buried at Knowsley, amid general mourning, not merely in the immediate neighbourhood, but almost all over Lancashire. Divers memorials were erected to him, both in the literal sense of statues and the figurative one of scholarships, &c., the chief of the former being one in Parliament Square. But more than by any statue, a sort of personal presentment of him is likely to be kept before the mind's eye by the famous lines which, hackneyed as they are in every account of Lord Derby, must be quoted again from the first Lord Lytton :—

> The brilliant chief, irregularly great,
> Frank, haughty, rash, *the Rupert of Debate.*

A remarkably vivid sketch in words, which may be tempered and qualified by the once well-known presentment of line in *Punch.* This latter is, perhaps, less of a caricature than any of Mr. Punch's gallery, and the character in it for that reason does his artists much credit. There is nothing obvious or cut-and-dried in it like Mr. Disraeli's hair, Lord Palmerston's straw, Mr. Gladstone's collars, or Lord John's schoolboy jacket ; and yet it is perfectly individual. Not very tall,

not regularly handsome, Lord Derby possessed an indefinable bearing and air which combined ease and authority, distinction and freedom from pose. With the physical advantages of an orator, including a tenor voice of great beauty, he was excellently furnished, and though he is said to have been very shortsighted, this did not exercise any ungraceful effect on his manner.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Greville's estimate of Lord Derby criticised and corrected in detail—Lord Derby's political philosophy—His character and ways—Anecdotes of him—Merits and defects of the aristocratic statesman considered and illustrated by Lord Derby's attitude to ecclesiastical questions—Summing-up.

General attention has of late years been diverted from Lord Derby, not merely by the fact of his death, but by the further facts that even before his death he had ceased to be the most prominent statesman of his own party, and that since that death new political struggles and changes, consequent on, but different from, those in which he took part, have filled the history of England, and occupied the attention of Englishmen. No historian of the first rank has yet arisen to tell the story and judge the men of the present century in our country ; and it is not as a rule till such a historian has arisen that the characters of statesmen become, either by virtue of his presentment, or in consequence of the discussions of it which follow, definitely fixed in the popular mind.

So far, I think, as any general estimate of the fourteenth Earl of Derby obtains among tolerably well-instructed persons who are not partisans, it to some extent resembles, and is probably to a great extent derived from, that of the

late Charles Greville. Into the value both of the witness in general and of this particular testimony of his we may enquire in a moment ; it is as well to summarise the testimony itself briefly as possible, with the proviso that it is gathered from a great number of different passages, some of which are, as is usual with Greville, apparently inconsistent with each other. But it comes—this view of a keen, if biassed observer, for nearly half a century, who was also a personal acquaintance and much behind scenes of all kinds —to this :—That Edward Stanley was a man of nearly the highest powers of oratory, and of at least a capacity for the highest statesmanship, of unblemished personal honour, and of a quite marvellous aptitude for adjusting himself to different circumstances ; but also one who had little general conception of politics, and less ability to keep steadily to that conception if he had entertained it ; who was in the main a politician, as he was a sportsman, for the fun of it, the excitement, the pastime—who, acting perpetually on impulse, was not infrequently betrayed into inconsistencies, and occasionally into unbecoming conduct ; who (though Greville did not often drop into poetry himself) might be said to flow like the Solway, but ebb with its tide, and was thus not less untrustworthy as a party leader than he was admirable as a partisan champion.

The warmest admirers of Lord Derby will probably admit that it is more easy to show cause against the credit of the witness than to impugn his testimony directly. If we had no other, it would be very easy to disable Greville at once. Not only was he probably aware of the terribly bitter jest to which I have referred before, and shall refer again—a gibe of all things most likely to be bitter to a man of his spirit—but he had both political and personal reasons for

disliking Lord Derby. Although no democrat, he was himself a very decided Whig, and he evidently found it hard to understand how any man of brains, birth, and breeding could be anything else. Now, Lord Derby was his own superior in all three, as well as in position and means, while the fact that they were both enthusiasts for the turf was not likely to conciliate Greville. Their likenesses equally with their differences must have disposed a man of very decided asperity and even jealousy of temperament to look with little charity on one whose genius and whose station both rebuked his. Moreover, as I hinted already, Greville, though an exceedingly acute, was a very hasty, judge. He has frequently acknowledged with charming frankness, and his editor has sometimes had to supplement his admissions, either that events have proved him quite wrong, or that he himself has completely altered his mind. This is to a certain extent engaging, but it cannot be said to qualify the witness for judging a long career and a complicated character.

If, however, a critic is to claim any share of that praise for frankness which has just been accorded to Greville himself, he must confess that there is some justification for this view—that a man might, without being either hopelessly dull or hopelessly prejudiced, consider Lord Derby's career and Lord Derby's character, and hold it. I do not think it is the true view, but there are considerable glimpses and glimmers of truth in it. Much in it requires correcting, and still more requires filling in and completion; but it is what an intelligent and not absolutely unscrupulous enemy naturally would, and, perhaps, even fairly might, say of the subject. I do not know that anyone has ever amused himself by constructing a contrasted catalogue to the famous

Lucretian list of the euphemisms by which a lover admits and disguises the weak points of his mistress. But Greville's portrait of Lord Derby, or the portrait which may be made up from his detached strokes, and which in one or two places is faintly outlined as a whole, would, if put into words, contain several exemplifications of the vocabulary by which a hater, or at least an enemy, exaggerates the defects and minimises the excellences of the object of his dislike. Let us see if before drawing a more flattering one we can reduce the charges of this Devil's Advocate and others to their lowest legitimate terms.

It is, as I think, and as I have endeavoured to point out on several occasions in the course of this book, the truth, that Lord Derby had no very consistent or thoroughgoing theory of politics, that he never gave himself the trouble to make one, that he would not improbably have been hampered and irked by one if he had had it. It was even truer in a sense than Greville seems to have thought. Even in a passage above referred to (which, by the way, he puts in the mouth of Sir James Graham, while intimating his assent to it), Greville seems to have thought that Stanley was a good Whig, or, at least, an anti-Tory in principle on all points except the Church, and that he would have been a good Whig in practice on all points save that, if it had not been for fits of ambition, impulse, whim, and personal dislike. My own view is quite contrary to this. I think that Stanley, though brought up to think nominal Toryism pig-headed and foolish, was always a Tory at heart, and that the consequences of the Reform Bill made him, though he would not for a long time acknowledge it, a Tory in fact, on all, or almost all, points. But, in the first place, he had a mind very much averse from the metaphysics of politics, as,

indeed, of all things, and never cared or dared to argue questions back to their first principles. In the second, it must be remembered that the changed condition of modern politics have made it no easy matter to construct such a theory. Even now, though for the better part of twenty years there has been a strong, and for periods a triumphant, Tory party, instead of the nondescript and disheartened Conservatives of 1845–1867, I suspect that comparatively few of its members hold such a theory. Even Lord Beaconsfield is not alleged by his strongest panegyrists to have gone much further than the undoubtedly valuable but elementary truths that there is no necessary opposition between Toryism and the masses ; that the foreign policy of a great country is generally of more importance to it than perpetual meddling with its home institutions ; and that the goodness of Governments does not stand in direct ratio to the number of measures they put on or take off the Statute-book. I do not think that Lord Derby got even as far as this ; or farther at all than a very clear consciousness that turning the national house upside down and throwing its contents out of windows every few years was a bad thing, and a somewhat less clear consciousness that, provided the people who thought so too could be got to act together and stop the process, it did not much matter how nondescript, or even how antagonistic, their opinions on general politics were.

A somewhat fanciful political philosopher might even say that his attitude was the natural reflection of the period, the appropriate concomitant of the transition and hesitation, of the stopgaps and half-way houses, which necessarily intervened between the beginnings and the completion of Parliamentary Reform. Another, less fanciful or not

fanciful at all, might urge that there was not only considerable antecedent excuse for it, but that it was actually beneficial to Toryism, as giving it time to collect and convert itself, to find its way in the altered political country, and adjust itself to the altered political circumstances. Such a one might point with some effect to the fact that in history uncompromising and direct reaction has very seldom succeeded even for a time, and scarcely ever in the long run ; and that if the Conservative instincts of the country had had nothing to represent them in Parliament after the Reform Bill but a remnant of Eldonian Toryism, such Toryism would simply have seen itself condemned to the same hopeless and ignoble impotence which has come upon it in some other countries. But I should doubt very much whether such considerations as these were very consciously present to Lord Derby's mind. He felt in himself all the energies and volitions of a political leader ; he was early thrown into the path of political leadership, and the very triumphs which he had helped to gain for the party with which, as a matter of course, he started developed differences of object and aim between him and that party which made it more and more impossible that he should lead it. There was no other ready-made for him to lead. His own idiosyncrasies did not induce or enable him to plan one out and construct it definitely *ab initio*. He did not, as the other Rupert did (and as Lord Palmerston thought Stanley himself would do), take to simple buccaneering. But for a time he chiefly hung in the wind, or beat backwards and forwards, gathering personal followers, striking out a course here and a course there, and at last, aided by the gradual development of Conservatism, and the talents of Mr. Disraeli, found himself in actual command of one side in

the war. Even then he was never strong enough to pursue an entirely independent course of tactics, even if he had felt disposed to do so, and death took him in the very moment rather of retreat and defeat than of anything else.

That this defect or quality in his intellectual view of politics was assisted by more than one feature of his temperament and disposition in matters other than intellectual is again perfectly true.

In the history of few statesmen does temperament play so large a part as in that of Lord Derby. He lived in a more decorous age than Bolingbroke, and was also very much more of a gentleman than that oddly combined person; nor is it probable that in any age he would have emulated St. John's boast of the three things he had done in one day. But there must have been something in the constant complaints of his 'not taking things seriously,' of his acting on impulse, of his flings and outbreaks; nay, in that famous passage of contrast between the figure he cut at one hour in St. Stephen's, and almost at the next among the 'blackguardism of Newmarket,' which the diarist has drawn in the spirit, though, unluckily, not with the pen, of Saint-Simon. The more philosophical way of putting it would be, not that he did not take politics seriously enough, but that he took everything with equal seriousness—politics, sport, the delight of battle, the charms of indolence, the sense of political leadership, the sense of its irksomeness. The incontinence of tongue, and the reluctance to act, or at least to act coherently and persistently, with which he has been charged, both belong to this peculiarity of temperament, always at the mercy of the moment's impulse, always (to borrow from a language

very poor as a rule in compounds an admirable compound for which our tongue, rich as it is in such things, has no equivalent) *prime-sautier*. They said that he was 'bold against individuals, but timid against bodies.' The truer, as well as the more charitable, explanation is that you can, at any rate for the moment, crush, conclude, and quell an individual by a witticism or an invective, while a body wants something like combined and continued operations to vanquish it.

All the less, as well as many of the more, creditable points of his character were derived from this peculiar careless impulsiveness. I cannot think of any statesman of the first rank in England of whom so many sayings of absolutely the first order in point of wit are recorded as of Lord Derby -for Canning's, which are equal in a certain sense, are far more laboured, far more 'of the lamp.' The Greville story is, that on the first Council day after Lord Derby's elevation to the Premiership, Greville showed his disapproval by not appearing in his place as clerk. Some busybody asked Lord Derby whether he had noticed Greville's absence, and Lord Derby replied, with a face of benevolent apology, 'No, really? You know I'm the most inattentive fellow in the world about these things. I *never* notice, when I ring the bell, whether John or Thomas answers it.' This has always, I confess, appeared to me a saying that no Frenchman of Lord Derby's order, from Retz or Rochefoucauld to Talleyrand, has surpassed or equalled. If Greville had actually been a *parvenu*, it would have been vulgar and unworthy. But in the position of the two, it could not have been better as a rebuke to a ridiculous piece of personal puerility, and official forgetfulness of the culprit's position. That the friend told Greville, and that

Greville loved Lord Derby ever afterwards, is not recorded, but may be taken for granted.

Much more generally known, less savage, but equally touched with the same Olympian consciousness of superiority, is the anecdote told in the House of Lords itself, for the benefit of a then youthful peer of great promise and talents, who had a habit, so to speak, of nagging at Lord Derby—the anecdote of the Lancashire collier whose wife used to beat him, who was remonstrated with for allowing this practice, and who pleaded in excuse for his forbearance that it 'amused her and didn't hurt him.' On another anecdote some long faces have been drawn. It is said that Lord Stanley made (in the House of Commons, I think) a furious attack on some of his rivals, and that a friend came up to him as he sat down amid shouts of applause, and said, 'You know, that was horribly unfair?' 'Yes,' replied Lord Stanley, 'but didn't you see how effective it was!' I am afraid, however, that, if the fact was true, Lord Derby, who was compact of humour, as an Englishman should be, had the very persons who draw the long faces in view, and intended to lengthen their visages for them.

Almost everybody who possesses this ready and prevailing kind of coin in pocket is apt to pay it out with a certain recklessness. But, still, I please myself by thinking that Lord Derby never outstepped the necessities of the occasion. If he did, I have seen in books, or heard in conversation, only one instance of it. That instance is not his rather Rabelaisian, but well-deserved, retort to a certain lady rallying him on the composition of his first Ministry, as it was the fashion to do, because of the newness of the men after a long course of Liberal Cabinets. Lady——

asked in regard to one of the most respectable and hard-working of politicians, who was later transferred from the head of the baronets to the tail of the peers, and is now with God, 'Is so-and-so a real man?' 'I don't know,' said Lord Derby; 'at any rate he has had three wives.' It is another gird of his, also reported by Lord Malmesbury on a somewhat similar occasion, when he was first sent for in 1851 and refused office. He explained the refusal in the House of Lords, to which he had been called in his father's lifetime, by alleging this same dearth of experienced colleagues. He went further, and probably forgetting, as even persons humorous themselves sometimes will, the humorous aspect of the matter, said that some particular person had declined to serve on account of the pressure of domestic duties. Thereafter, Lady Jocelyn asked him whom he had meant? 'Not Jocelyn,' quoth he; at which, says Lord Malmesbury, she looked put out, and no wonder. The question was, even from a lady, a little impertinent, and the parties were on terms of intimacy justifying a sharp answer; but perhaps, to a lady, it was a little too sharp.

But it was very seldom that there was real gall in Lord Derby's humour, though, like most humour, it had the property of enraging fools. It has been maintained gravely, and with more reason than gravity always carries with it, that a statesman of eminence ought, for this reason, never to be humorous and not often clever. I suppose, for instance, that Lord Derby ought not to have made another of his famous gibes, wherein, making game of the 'national' argument about Italy, he suggested that all sorts of curs and true-bred animals were generically called dogs, but that there was remarkably little likeness or amity between them,

for all that. He ought not to have said it, perhaps ; but I should not have liked him so well if he had not. The less important jest about preferring the gout when an importunate vendor of cheap wine boasted that there was none of it in a hogshead of his vintage has been attributed to others, and is certainly not beyond the reach of any tolerably lively imagination. But it is a good saying, and quite in Lord Derby's vein—that easy vein of good-humoured contempt which is so much more common in Irishmen than in Englishmen, and in which, among Englishmen of great political position, Lord Derby's chief recorded rival is his Majesty Charles II. Mr. Kebbel, I see, has made the comparison before me, and I do not say *pereat*, though I have thought of the resemblance for many years, as I dare say others have.

All the traditions of him are redolent of the same genuine, but rather inaccessible, bonhomie, which never derogated, and did not very often assume. Yet here, again, there can be no doubt that his freedom of speech did cause a good deal of bewilderment and a good deal of offence in many classes of persons. The most famous instance of this is, of course, the passage of arms with the Bishop of Oxford on the Canada Clergy Reserves Bill. This was a measure on which Wilberforce, in one of his fits either of genuine Liberalism, of partisanship, or of mere popularity-hunting, took the side against the Canadian clergy. Lord Derby moved an amendment to it, and the Bishop, speaking against this amendment, quoted Burke speaking of the intractableness of Americans, as to 'attempts to wrest freedom from them by force or shuffle it from them by chicane.' To this innuendo Lord Derby objected, and the Bishop made matters worse by saying that the allusion was made with a

smile. Lord Derby was not exactly the man to spare so lame an apology, and retorted that he accepted the right reverend prelate's explanation. 'But when he tells me that it is impossible for him to say anything offensive because he has a smiling face, he will forgive me for quoting in his presence a passage from a well-known author, without in the least intending to apply the words to him—

A man may smile and smile, and be a villain.'

Shakspeare for Burke, and 'villany' for 'chicanery,' make a very fair specimen of Lord Derby's mode of hitting back and paying his debts. He gave another when Lord Clarendon affected to be scandalised at hearing, 'even in the language of poetry, such an expression as "villain" applied to any noble lord in this House.' Quoth my Lord Derby, who was never at a loss for a counter-check quarrelsome, that Lord Clarendon 'had better keep his indignation till he was himself attacked, when he would probably want it all.' It was an excellent rally, and though I have myself a great admiration for the intellectual powers of Bishop Wilberforce, I do not think he had any reason to complain, especially since he records that at the Academy dinner, three or four days afterwards, Lord Derby, who was sitting next but one to him, leant over and said, 'At all events, I must do the Bishop of Oxford the justice to say that *he* can take a joke.' He did not know what Wilberforce had entered in his diary, and I am rather surprised that Mr. Kebbel, who did, should say that the Bishop was 'not in the least offended.'

As a matter of fact, his entry for the day is that Lord Derby had retorted 'ungenerously, rudely, and stupidly,' while he himself 'returned home utterly desponding and

utterly discontented with his own speech' ; while he later records Stockmar's condemnation of Lord Derby's 'vulgarity.' Few people will, I think, agree with this *arbiter elegantiarum*, however great his competence.

Much earlier, Lord Dalling's references to the supposed unpleasantness between Stanley and Peel in his 'Life of Palmerston' are full of humour. After describing Lord Derby as 'haughty and domineering in character, though gay and playful in manner,' he goes on to say, in regard to his relations with Peel, 'What was worse than all was the eternal habit of quizzing, or, to use the modern word, chaffing, in which the inconsiderate noble indulged.' His account, however, of the crucial occasion is tantalisingly discreet. At a shooting party, it seems, in which they both took part, 'The dignified calm of his [Peel's] countenance was unwillingly ruffled by a volley of bad jokes.' It is rather a shame not to have given us the jokes, which may not have been so bad—Lord Derby's were not wont to be so. It would seem, however, that the 'ruffling' went so far that Peel seriously thought of getting rid of the inconsiderate noble, though one would hardly have thought that Prime Ministers were sacrosanct from jokes. No doubt Lord Derby's jests were sometimes rather trying to the objects of them ; but what is less intelligible is that they should have scandalised the public as they seem to have done. If with a solemn and shocked countenance he had called his enemies all the names in the world, or suggested that they were capable of most of the crimes in the calendar, and had actually committed a good number, it would probably not have caused such scandal as his 'thimblerig' speech, above referred to, or as his brush with a prelate-politician, who was himself by no means

unaccustomed to take the gloves off, and other matters of the kind.

It must, however, be admitted by Lord Derby's worst enemies that he reserved his contempt and his superciliousness for those who either were actually his own equals or moved in the same society with himself. Aristocrat as he was accused of being, he was more liked by his inferiors in station than most democrats. Although Lancashire was not then the home of Toryism which it has since become, he did much to make it so, and was extraordinarily popular with his neighbours and tenants. It is said that, though he was very proud of shooting white-fronted geese in Lord Malmesbury's famous home of wild fowl on the Avon, he was not quite so pleased when at home he exterminated, on an unlucky occasion, by shooting through a hedge, the tame villatic variety under the belief that they were partridges; that he did not like guests who in the days of muzzle-loaders forgot to bring caps with them; and that when he was laid up with gout, and his friends were exterminating the Knowsley woodcock, his language was energetic, and almost amounted to repining. I think we can forgive all this as easily as I, at least, can forgive his early devotion to blind hookey—an excellent game which has only the disadvantage of being a trifle monotonous.

He was indeed altogether a delightfully human person, as human as Lord Palmerston, with far greater scholarship and a higher eloquence; at least as good a scholar as Mr. Gladstone, with more humour and more humanity; as sharp with his tongue as Mr. Disraeli himself, with the advantage of better breeding and a more English tone; a thorough sportsman, the absence of which quality I have heard some of my friends urge as the only spot in Lord Salisbury's sun;

of far heavier calibre than Lord Melbourne, his rival and Palmerston's in easy wearing of honours ; a man of original genius, which distinguished him from the Aberdeens, the Greys, and the Goderichs. He was absolutely free from the slightest tincture of that priggishness which certainly marred, to some extent, the indomitable spirit, the true patriotism, and the unflagging industry of him whom it is still more natural, even for those who were not born when he was a prominent statesman, to call Lord John Russell. Lastly, by dint of that very lack of seriousness with which he has been reproached, he escaped that charge of being too much of what they call across the Channel the *commis* order of Minister, the businesslike, conscientious, and intelligent clerk *in excelsis*, which has been sometimes, and not always by Whigs or Protectionists, brought against Sir Robert Peel. In other words, Lord Derby may be pronounced the most perfect example that we have yet had of the aristocratic type of Minister of a constitutionally-governed country. His example will help at once to define and to illustrate the idea of such a politician, which appears to me to be nowadays a little confused in many minds. Lord Derby was by no means a perfect embodiment of that idea ; he had not all its qualities ; he had some of its defects rather eminently. But we might look far over history before finding a better.

What are these defects and these qualities? One thing, at least, which is very commonly counted among the former is, I think, a delusion, and certainly will not be found illustrated in Lord Derby. It is perhaps sometimes thought, and it is certainly very often said, that the aristocratic politician is almost necessarily selfish, regarding, if not his own private interest, yet the interest of his order, before all others.

It certainly does not lie in the mouths of the present generation to bring any such charge. No governing class during the time throughout which the aristocracy, major and minor, landed or moneyed, new or old, is supposed to have had the control of legislation, ever showed, in dealing with feudal rights or with Land-tax, with Corn-laws or with timber duties, more direct regard to its own interests than the middle classes did during the thirty or forty years in which they were practically supreme. And neither upper nor middle class ever even approached the sublimity of egotism with which during the last five and twenty years working-class delegates, spokesmen, and members have expressly, openly, avowedly limited their whole programme and theory of politics to the getting of more wages for less work, and the cutting off of all kinds of national expenditure not directly tending to their own profit. Indeed, taking the very lowest point of view, there are scores of reasons why the aristocrat should be, as he certainly is, a less—not a more—selfish politician than the democrat. He has more margin on which he can afford to be generous ; he has a greater interest, historical and other, in the glory and the well-being of the country as distinct from his own ; he is in a position to administer to himself the luxury of beneficence ; and the comparative absence of the pettiest cares encourages in him a less petty and self-regarding habit of mind. These considerations, I think, are practical enough, and not at all high-flying ; they are simply founded on knowledge of what has been and study of what is likely to be, and they may be accepted by anyone who, whatever his unargued predilections, is content to know and to study.

But, doubtless, there are some peculiar defects of the

aristocratic statesman, and, doubtless, also, they were illustrated by Lord Derby. The same unerring process of taking the lowest point of view will lead us to them. The chief of them are an incapacity of taking trouble (owing to so much being done beforehand for the advantage of the individual) ; a tendency to treat politics rather from the standpoint of the amateur than from that of the professional ; an indifference to those minor arts which, if not exactly fine arts, are most useful ones in politics as elsewhere ; and a certain inability (reasonable when there is so much to retire upon) to take political things with sufficient seriousness. They may, indeed, be almost all summed up in the proposition that the aristocratic politician does not take politics quite enough as a business, and that if there is a gain in this, as far as disinterestedness is concerned, there is also a loss in thoroughness. More than one example of this lack of thoroughness has been noted in Lord Derby, beginning with his seeming inability to think politics back to any consistent principle. Another may be exhibited by a digression in some detail on his attitude towards one of the most important subjects that can—at any rate, that could —occupy an English statesman : the subject of religion and ecclesiastical difficulties.

On these Lord Derby was very far from being, as Lord Palmerston was, a Gallio. But there was one great mistake of his which worked most unluckily against him and against his successor in the election of 1868, and which has, perhaps, been as yet insufficiently allowed for. This was his failure to recognise and secure the support of that party in the Church which, founded, or rather refounded, just as he was first making his mark in political life, was more and more to

absorb the intellect and, to a still greater degree, the activity of the Church of England. He never, indeed, committed such horrible blunders as Mr. Disraeli did—first, in offending perhaps the ablest, the most personally sensitive, the most influential, and, in certain ways, the most unscrupulous man in that Church, and so throwing him into Mr. Gladstone's arms; secondly, in favouring the Public Worship Regulation Act. But, though himself a thoroughly sound Churchman, he had no understanding of, and no sympathy with, the new High Church party, which had come up since his day at Oxford. Everything should have led him to cultivate them: for, whatever an occasional 'wild curate' may hold, the interests and principles of the High Church and Tory parties, rightly understood, are wholly identical. In later days, moreover, the constant irritation which Lord Palmerston's and Lord John Russell's dispensation of patronage after the ideas of Lord Shaftesbury produced on them, gave him a valuable opportunity of winning them to his side. This opportunity he did not entirely neglect, and in at least one remarkable speech he referred to it, and gave a sort of indication of his own ecclesiastical position. He was very far from being indifferent to religious questions, even when they were wholly unconnected with politics, and very early in life he had written a handbook for children—'Conversations on the Parables'—said to show aptitude in their discussion. But, with his strongly eighteenth-century turn of mind, he was ill disposed to any form of 'enthusiasm.' Greville gives an exceedingly amusing, though brief, account (derived from the present Lord Grey) of an interview of his with Mr. Spencer Percival, an enthusiastic Irvingite, who

in the year 1836 made a visitation of the Ministers of the day and of other distinguished persons, especially Privy Councillors. His reception naturally varied. It is not surprising to hear that Lord Melbourne, who, as we know from other sources, was rather great in divinity, 'argued with and cross-questioned him.' He got no argument and no cross-questioning from Stanley, who 'turned him out at once,' saying, 'There is no use, Mr. Percival, in going on in this way with me. We had, therefore, better put an end to the subject, and I wish you good-morning.' There is all the Stanley of 1836 in the Stanley who, twenty-one years later, and just on the eve of the general election of 1857, addressed himself to the Shaftesbury appointments. He 'wished not to be misunderstood.' He 'had no sympathy with what are called Tractarian views,' and he 'could conceive nothing more dangerous, nothing more detrimental, to the interests of the Church of England than the preponderance of the Tractarian party.' But he 'declined to throw himself into the other extreme'—to give his sympathies to 'pseudo-Liberalism and latitudinarianism.' He had 'the greatest respect for the labours and the energy and the piety of many of the Dissenters'; but he 'confessed that his sympathies, his feelings, his affections were with that party which, with their Bible for their guide, with the ancient fathers of the Church and the modern lights of the Reformed Church as the commentators and assistants, are more ready to inculcate upon their hearers the practical precepts than the abstract doctrines of religion,' the party which would not 'compliment away' any of the Church's fundamental and essential doctrines. It is difficult to imagine a sounder or a more rational profession of faith :

it is easy to imagine one which would pay a great deal better at the polls.

Against this must be set the fact that, though Sir Robert Peel himself was very little of a Churchman, the so-called Peelite school happened (very much by accident) to be closely connected with the High Church party; while the Tory remnant, after the Peelite split, were at best high and dry, if not Evangelically disposed. Moreover, Lord Derby would not, and Mr. Disraeli could not, inform himself of the movement of thought and taste among the younger generation: and thus a section of the party in the Church which ought to have been the very stronghold of Toryism was allowed to follow Mr. Gladstone—first into the Peelite, and then into the Radical, camp. The mischief which this did at the elections of 1868 and 1880 may not be exactly calculable, but was certainly great; and, though Lord Derby was not directly responsible for the later blunderings, he was for the earlier, and through them indirectly for the later. Indeed, it was not in his nature to set to work as Mr. Disraeli did—with great success in some cases; in others, such as this very one, with terrible failure—to look out and get together all the elements of resistance to unnecessary change. He was too apt, by custom and by temperament, to confine his attention to Parliament; or, if he looked beyond Parliament, to the country gentleman. He never quite realised that his own action in 1832 had brought about a state of things in which 'interests' were immensely multiplied, and in which each interest had acquired the power of making itself felt. It is fair to say, however, that he was probably not unaware of the, to say the least, ungracious attitude which the High Church party at Oxford had assumed

towards himself in the matter of the election for Chancellor: and that it was even less in his nature to attempt to curry favour with persons whom he might suspect of treating him shabbily. Be this as it may, it is quite certain that, whereas the High Church movement had been in its earlier stages for the most part distinctly Tory in its leanings, there grew up in Lord Derby's later years a strong High Church Radical party which, adroitly used by Mr. Gladstone, had not a little to do with the Radical majority at the election of 1868, with the destruction of the Irish Church, and with many, if not most, of the innovations which have been made since. I happen myself to have had occasions of observing this party almost from its beginning, and I am quite certain that it would never have come into being, or would have remained quite insignificant, if the Tory leaders had understood the condition of ecclesiastical matters between the fall of Lord Aberdeen's Government and the last return of Lord Derby to power. I am not sure that, next to playing fast and loose with Reform, it was not their greatest mistake. But it was the kind of mistake which, natural in Mr. Disraeli for one reason, was natural in Lord Derby for quite another. It was part, in his case, of his too general neglect to watch and weigh the changes of national and popular sentiment, the growth or waning of new or old varieties of thought and feeling.

But if he had these, and perhaps other, defects of the aristocratic spirit, he had also in very large measure the virtues belonging to that spirit, which are many and great. The two greatest of them, as it seems to me, are absolute personal independence, and a sincere and undaunted patriotism. This absolute personal independence, while it is,

or should be, within the reach of everyone in a free country, is the boast of democrats rather than of aristocrats, but it is much more rarely shown by the former than by the latter. A democratic leader is, indeed, often more imperious and more implicitly obeyed in his commands than any oligarch or any tyrant ; but he has at least to pretend to shape his conduct and his opinions to the popular will, and it will go hard but he must frequently court and sometimes actually cringe to that will. The temper—no doubt largely the result of the circumstances—of men like Lord Derby is quite different. His own opinions may not have been always wise or always logically formed, but it is impossible for anyone to maintain that he adopted them in the fear or in the favour of others. He broke away from his first party on account of conscience or of prejudice (whichever anyone likes to call it), when it appeared to most persons to be political death for him to do so, and certainly with no intention of courting the other side. At later times, as we have seen, he repeatedly refused to accept the dictation of the party which he had made his own. He might be accused of recklessness, he might be accused of wilfulness, but he never could be accused of subserviency : and even those who disapprove most of the last great political act of his life—as well as, I suppose, those who approve most of it in itself, if not as done by him—cannot think of attributing it either to intimidation or to a desire to cringe. Now, it seems to me that this inflexible adherence to a man's own opinions, this steady following of the guidance of his own soul, is the greatest of all political virtues. Without it freedom is a misleading name. It may be that the opinions are erroneous, and, if so, the man's judgment may be dis-

abled; but his political character remains unimpugned, and it is character, not judgment, of which we are now speaking.

The second virtue which Lord Derby certainly possessed, and which he probably possessed, in part at least, as a consequence of his birth and training, was patriotism. There have been very patriotic democrats, but I do not think that on the whole patriotism can be called a democratic virtue. It may become so; it has not been so in the past. Just as it was said of Clarissa, that there is always something that she prefers to the truth, so there is always something that your democrat seems to prefer to his country. Lord Derby's utterances on foreign policy were numerous, and they were almost always sound, as was his conduct. Even in 1855, it is not extravagant to contend that the danger of attempting to conduct affairs at such a time with a minority may have partly caused his refusal to take office; and in regard to the Chinese war (the only occasion where he seems to have gone near to factious opposition on such a subject), it may be contended that not enough was at stake to make the question one really national. At any rate, I think he was generally guided, if not by the caricatured sentiment 'Our country, right or wrong,' by that sentiment of which it is a caricature. Nor can he, as Lord Palmerston may, be accused of being a little prone to violate prosody by reading *parcere superbis et debellare subjectos*.

It is not, perhaps, frivolous or base to add to these great and serious merits a third, which may be said to be the quality of the defect noted above, the quality of taking politics, and all things, not too seriously. It is of course the inevitable danger of this quality that it runs into the fault

of not taking things seriously enough, and this could (but, as I think, less often than is sometimes said) be urged against Lord Derby. But at its best, a best which he himself often showed, it develops great and very engaging excellences. It saves its possessor from the danger of gush and cant, the two most disgusting vices of the politician. Lord Derby, as he many times showed, could be nobly serious when the occasion required seriousness, and he was quite free from that excessive pococurantism which Lord Palmerston affected and which to some extent really distinguished him. But he could always see the humour of it, and this, as it seems to me, is one of the greatest and rarest gifts of a statesman. Its excellence is really of a more practical kind than is often thought. It protects a man almost entirely from that risk of being worn down by nervous exhaustion which has proved fatal to some great statesmen, and to many small ones. It gives him strength to bide the fiercest brunts, as Lord Derby showed in his early struggles with O'Connell. It gives him patience to endure those periods of disappointment and inaction which happen to almost all, and in which men of a more feminine order wear themselves away. It protects him from the approaches of sycophancy—the insect plague of political prominence. If, as it does perhaps, it carries with it the danger of seeing things too small, it frees its possessor from the still greater danger of seeing them too large. For it keeps before him that best of all maxims,

Mais le plus sage en rit, sachant qu'il doit mourir.

And this quality, combined as it was in Lord Derby's case with high and generous sentiment, with wide and active intelligence, with a thorough sense of literature, and an

ardent affection for the country, with whose history and name the history of his name is indissolubly united, provides a type of statesman, not perhaps fit for all emergencies, not, certainly, free from all reproach, but of singular interest and charm—a type, which if it sometimes incurs disapproval, never arouses disgust, and which, if it sometimes is unequal to opportunities and not incapable of blunders, never deserves hatred or justifies contempt.

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